SIX LITTLE BUNKERS *at* AUNT JO'S

·LAURA LEE HOPE·

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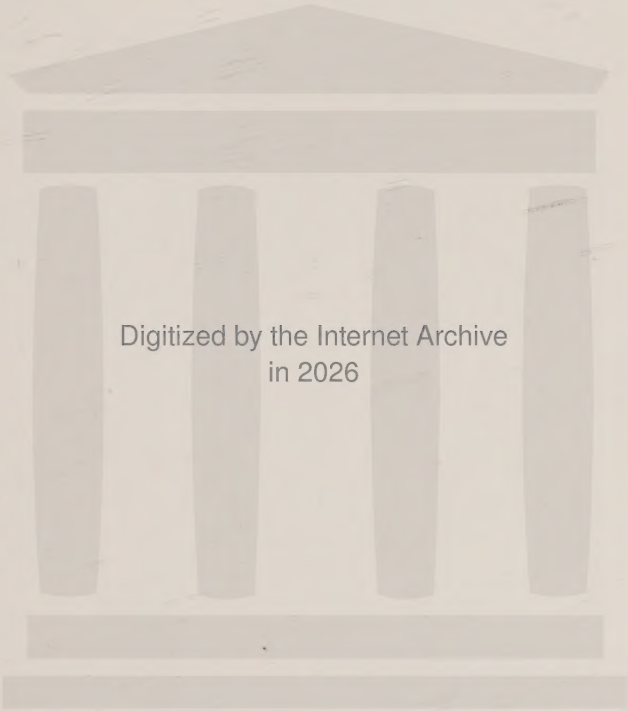
A Merry Xmas to
Susan from
Uncle Fred and Edward
1918



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THE CHILDREN WERE HAVING LOTS OF FUN WITH THEIR FUNNY LITTLE PET.

SIX LITTLE BUNKERS AT AUNT JO'S

BY

LAURA LEE HOPE

AUTHOR OF "THE BOBBSEY TWINS SERIES," "THE BUNNY BROWN SERIES," "THE OUTDOOR GIRLS SERIES," ETC.

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By LAURA LEE HOPE

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Six Little Bunkers at Aunt Jo's

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SIX LITTLE BUNKERS AT AUNT JO'S

CHAPTER I

A QUEER HUNT

"LET me count noses now, to see if you're all here," said Mother Bunker with a laugh, as her flock of children gathered around her.

"Don't you want some help?" asked Grandma Bell. "Can you count so many boys and girls all alone, Amy?"

"Oh, I think so," answered Mother Bunker. "You see I am used to it. I count them every time we come to the woods, and each time I start for home, to be sure none has been left behind. Now then, children! Attention! as the soldier captain says."

Six little Bunkers, who were getting ready to run off into the woods to frolic and have a good time at a good-bye picnic, laughed and shouted and finally stood still long enough

for their mother to "count noses," as she called it.

"And I'll help," said Grandma Bell, at whose country home in Maine, near Lake Sagatook, the six little Bunkers were spending part of their summer vacation.

"Russ and Rose!" called Mother Bunker.

"Here we are!" answered Russ, and he pointed to his sister.

"Vi and Laddie!" went on Mrs. Bunker.

"We're here, but we're going to run now," said Laddie. "I'm going to think of a riddle to guess when we get to the woods."

"Where are you going to run to?" asked Vi, or Violet, which was her right name, though she was more often called Vi. "Where you going to run to, Laddie?" she asked again. But Laddie, her twin brother, did not stop to answer the question. Indeed it would take a great deal of time to reply to the questions Vi asked, and no one ever stopped to answer them all, any more than they tried to answer all the riddles—real and make-believe—that Laddie asked.

"Well, that's four of them," said Grandma Bell with a laugh.

"Yes," said Mother Bunker. "And now for the last. Margy and Mun!"

"We's here!" said Margy, who, as you may easily guess, was, more properly, Margaret. "Come on, Mun Bun!" she called. "Now we can have some fun."

And for fear you might be wondering what sort of creature Mun Bun was, I'll say right here that he was Margy's little brother, and his right name was Munroe Ford Bunker; but he was called Mun Bun for short.

"They're all here," said Grandma Bell, with a smile.

"Yes," answered Mrs. Bunker, as she saw the six children running across the field toward the woods. "They're all here now, and I hope they'll all be here when we start back."

"Oh, I think they will," said Grandma Bell with a smile. "I'm sorry this is your last picnic with me. I certainly have enjoyed your visit here—yours and the children's."

The two women walked slowly over the field and toward the woods, in which the six little Bunkers were already running about and having fun. The woods were on the

edge of Lake Sagatook, and not far from Grandma Bell's house.

"Come on, Rose!" called Russ to his sister. "We'll have a last ride on the steamboat."

"I want to come, too!" shouted Laddie, dropping a bundle of pine cones he had picked up.

"So do I," added Vi. "I want a ride."

"Say, we can't all get on the steamboat at once!" Russ cried. "It'll sink if we do."

"Then we can play shipwreck," proposed Rose.

"Yes, we could do that," Russ agreed. "But if the steamboat sinks it'll be on the bottom of the lake, and it won't move and we can't have rides. That'll be no fun!" And the boy began to whistle, which he almost always did when he was thinking hard, as he was just now.

"Well, what can we do?" asked Rose. "I want a ride on the steamboat."

It wasn't really a steamboat at all, being only some fence rails and boards nailed roughly together. It was more of a raft than a boat, but it would float in the shallow water of the lake near the shore, and the

children could stand on it in their bare feet and paddle about in a small cove that a bend in the shore-line of the lake made. The reason they had to take off their shoes and stockings was because the water came up over the top of the raft, and splashed on the children's feet. Anyhow, it was more fun to go barefooted, and no sooner had the six little Bunkers reached the shore of the lake in the midst of the woods, than off came their shoes and stockings.

"I want to ride on the steamer, too," said Mun Bun.

"No, we don't want to do that," put in Margy, who was standing near him.

"Why?" he asked.

"'Cause."

"But why?"

"Don't you 'member? We're goin' to roll downhill where the pine needles make it so slippery."

"Oh, yes," agreed Mun Bun. "We'll roll downhill, and then we'll ride on the steamer."

"But I want a ride now!" insisted Violet.

"So do I," added Laddie.

"I asked first," cried Rose. "But I s'pose

mother'll make me give in to you two, 'cause I'm older'n you; but I don't want to," she added.

"My! what's all this about?" asked Mother Bunker, as she came along with Grandma Bell, the two women having walked more slowly than the children. "Has anything happened?" She could tell by the faces of the little ones that everything was not just right.

"Oh, they all want to ride on the steamboat at once, and it isn't big enough," explained Russ.

"Then you must take turns," said Mother Bunker quickly. "That's the only way to do. Rose, dear, you are the oldest; you will let Laddie and Violet have the first ride, will you not?"

"There! I *knew* you'd ask me to do that!" cried Rose, and her voice was not just as pleasant as it might have been.

"Never mind, Rose," whispered Russ to her. "I'll give you a longer ride than I give them. Anyway, they'll soon get tired of the raft, and then you and I can play sailor, and steamboat around as much as we like."

"And will you let me help push with the pole?" asked Rose.

"Yes, you can do that, of course," Russ agreed.

"All right," assented Rose. "I'll wait. Go on, Violet and Laddie. You may have your ride first."

With shouts of glee the twins ran down to the edge of the lake where the raft, or, as Russ called it, the "steamboat," was tied by a rope to an old stump. Russ, with the help of Tom Hardy, the hired man, had made the raft, and on it the children had had lots of fun.

Russ now took his place in the middle, holding a long pole by which he pushed the raft about in the shallow cove of the lake. The water here was not deep—hardly over the children's knees.

"All aboard!" cried Russ, and Laddie and Violet got on the raft. Mother Bunker and Grandma Bell sat down in the shade to watch, while Mun Bun and Margy ran over to a little hill, covered with dry, slippery pine needles, and there they started to roll over and over down the slope, tumbling about in

the soft grass at the foot, laughing and giggling.

Up and down, and around and around the little cove of Lake Sagatook Russ pushed his little twin brother and sister. The raft was just about large enough for three children of the size of those who were on it, but any more would have made it sink to the sandy bottom of the lake. Then, though they might have played "shipwreck," it would not be as much fun, Russ thought.

"Toot! Toot!" cried Russ, making believe he was the steamboat's whistle. Then he ding-donged the bell and hissed, to let off steam. Violet and Laddie laughed, and did the same thing, pretending they were part of the engine of the boat.

"Well, I think you have ridden on the steamboat long enough now, Laddie and Vi!" called Mother Bunker, after a bit. "Give Rose a turn."

"Just one more ride!" pleaded Laddie.

"All right—just one more. But that's the last," said Russ.

So he poled the raft across the cove again, and then his little brother and sister got off

while Rose waded out in her bare feet and got on board, carrying a pole so she could help push the raft; for it had no sails like a sailboat, and no motor like a motor-boat, and to make it go it had to be pushed.

"Come on, Vi. Let's go over and roll downhill with Margy and Mun Bun," said Laddie, after watching Rose and Russ a bit. "They're having lots of fun."

The two smallest of the six little Bunkers did, indeed, appear to be having a good time. Over and over they rolled down the clean, slippery hill covered with the brown pine needles.

Soon Laddie and Vi joined in the fun, and their shouts and laughter could be heard by Mother Bunker and Grandma Bell, where they were sitting in the shade of the trees.

All at once Laddie, who had rolled to the bottom of the hill, ending with a somersault in the soft grass, stood up and called:

"Listen! What's that?"

Vi, Margy and Mun Bun listened.

"I don't hear anything," said Vi.

"I do," went on Laddie. "It's some one hollering!"

And, as the children became quiet and listened more intently, they did, indeed, hear a voice calling:

"Come and get me! Come and get me!"

"Oh, it's somebody lost in the woods!" said Violet.

"A little boy, maybe!" exclaimed Laddie.

"Or a little girl," added Mun Bun, his eyes big with wonder.

"Let's go and hunt for 'em," proposed Laddie. "If we were lost, we'd like some one to hunt for us. Come on!"

The other children did not stop to think whether or not this was right. Laddie was the oldest of the four, except Violet, who was just as old, except maybe a minute or two, and Mun Bun and Margy thought what Laddie said must be right.

"Come and get me! Come and get me!" cried the voice again, and to the four little Bunkers it seemed to be a sad one.

"Come on!" exclaimed Laddie. And the children started on a queer hunt.

CHAPTER II

GOOD-BYE TO GRANDMA

Mrs. Bunker, who was busy talking to Grandma Bell, looked up just in time to see Laddie, Violet, Margy and Mun Bun running off through the woods.

"Children! Children!" she cried. "Where are you going?"

Faintly came back Laddie's answer:

"There's a little boy or girl lost in the woods, an' they're callin' to us and we're going to hunt for 'em!"

"Oh, my!" exclaimed Mother Bunker. "Wait, children! Wait for me!" she continued. "Russ—Rose! Come off the raft! I don't want you on it while I'm not near you!"

"Where are you going?" asked Grandma Bell, as she saw her daughter getting up.

"I'm going to see what those children

mean," was Mrs. Bunker's answer. "I can't tell what mischief they may get into."

And while Rose and Russ poled the raft toward shore, as their mother told them to, and got off, Mrs. Bunker started after the other children, who were going to find the strange voice that had called to them.

And while this is going on I shall have a chance to tell my new readers something about the little Bunkers. There were six of them, as, perhaps, you have counted. Russ, or Russell, to give him the whole of his name, was eight years old. He was the oldest, a great boy for making things to play with, such as a steamboat out of some old boards, or an automobile from a chair and a sofa cushion. He was also very fond of whistling, and knew several real tunes.

Rose, who came next, was seven years old. She was a regular "mother's helper," and often sang as she washed the dishes or did the dusting. She had light hair and blue eyes while Russ had a dark complexion.

Then there came Violet and Laddie, the twins, aged six. Laddie's real name was Fillmore Bunker, but he was seldom called

that. His hair was curly, and his eyes were gray, and whether that made him so fond of making up riddles, or of asking those others made up, I can't say. Anyhow he did it. His twin sister loved to ask questions. She could ask more questions in a day than several persons could answer. No one ever tried to answer all Vi asked. Her hair and eyes were just like Laddie's.

Next came Margy and Mun Bun. Margy was five, and her brother was a year younger. He had blue eyes and golden hair, and, you can easily imagine, was a pretty picture.

"Daddy" Bunker, whose name was Charles, had a real estate and lumber office in Pineville, which was in Pennsylvania, and was on the Rainbow River. About twenty thousand people lived in Pineville, and it was a very nice place indeed. The home of the Bunkers was on the main street of the town, and was less than a mile from Daddy Bunker's office.

Then there was Mother Bunker, whose hands were full keeping house and looking after the six little Bunkers. Her name was

Amy, and before she married Daddy Bunker her last name had been Bell.

Those of you who have read the first book of this series, called "Six Little Bunkers at Grandma Bell's," remember that there were two other members of the "family"—Norah O'Grady, the good-natured Irish cook, and Jerry Simms, the man who had once been a soldier and who was very kind to the children. Jerry did odd bits of work about the house, and often ran the automobile for Mr. Bunker.

The Bunkers had many relatives. There was Grandma Bell, who was Mrs. Bunker's mother, and there was Grandpa Ford, who was Daddy Bunker's stepfather. He was kind and good, and had loved Daddy Bunker when Daddy Bunker was a little boy, and now loved the six little Bunkers as well. Grandma Bell lived in Maine, near Lake Sagatook, and Grandpa Ford lived at Tarrington, New York, his place being called Great Hedge Estate.

Then there was Miss Josephine Bunker (she was "Aunt Jo," you know), who lived in Boston; Uncle Frederick Bell, of Moon

City, Montana; and Cousin Tom Bunker, who lived at Seaview, on the New Jersey coast.

In the first book I told you about the six little Bunkers when on a visit to Grandma Bell, in Maine, and how they helped solve a mystery and find some valuable real estate papers that an old tramp lumberman had carried off in a ragged coat.

I can't begin to tell you, here, all the fun the six little Bunkers had at Grandma Bell's. They spent the last of July and the first part of August there, and now, just before leaving, they were planning for the rest of the summer vacation.

But, just at the present moment, something else was happening. The children's play had been stopped by the voice in the woods; a voice heard by Laddie, Vi, Mun Bun and Margy.

"Are you sure it was a little child you heard calling?" asked Mrs. Bunker, overtaking the four children.

"Oh, yes; sure!" answered Laddie. "It was a little boy."

"I think it was a little girl," said Violet.

"Hark!" exclaimed Grandma Bell, who had

come with Mother Bunker. "There it goes once more!"

And, surely enough, the voice called again:

"Come and get me! I'm lost!"

"Poor thing!" said Grandma Bell. "I wonder whose little boy or girl it is."

"'Tisn't any of us," said Violet, "'cause we're all here!"

"Yes, I counted to make sure," said Mother Bunker. "But we must find out who it is. Come on, children. Are we going too fast for you, Mother?" she asked Grandma Bell.

"Oh, no, indeed!"

"We must find the lost one," Mother Bunker continued, and so they kept on with the queer hunt. Every now and then they could hear the voice calling. Pretty soon Mrs. Bell said:

"I can hear some one coming."

Then the voice called again:

"Come and get me! I'm lost!"

"Oh, there it is! Over in that direction!" exclaimed Grandma Bell.

They hurried toward a thick clump of trees, from which the voice seemed to come. Then, all at once, another voice called:

"Oh, there you are! I see you! Now come right here to me, and don't go away again!"

"Why, I know who *that* is!" exclaimed Grandma Bell.

Before the children could ask they heard a funny voice say:

"Oh, hello! Pretty Poll! Pretty Poll! Polly wants a cracker!"

"Well, you'll get one, and it won't be a sweet cracker, either, if you fly out of your cage again," said a man's voice. "You'll get a fire-cracker! Now you flutter right down to me and be good!"

"Hello! Hello!" said the funny voice, and then came a strange laugh. "Ha! Ha! Ha!"

"Why—why! It's a *parrot!*" shouted Laddie. "I can see his green feathers!"

"Yes, and there is Mr. Hixon after him," said Grandma Bell. "You have been fooled by Bill Hixon's parrot, children, just as you were teased once before. It wasn't a little boy or girl lost in the woods at all. It was just the parrot."

"That's just what it was, Mrs. Bell," said Mr. Hixon, and a man stepped out from behind a tree. "Were you after him, too?" he

asked, as he held out his hand the parrot flew down out of the tree and alighted on his finger.

"The children, playing in the woods, heard your parrot calling, and thought it was a lost child," said Mrs. Bunker. "Did he get out of his cage?"

"That's what he did," said Mr. William Hixon, or "Bill," as his neighbors called him. "He got out early this morning, and I've been looking for him ever since. I followed along through these woods, because a man said he had seen a green bird flying about in here, and, surely enough, I heard my Polly singing out about being lost, and wanting some one to come and get her. She always begs that way when she gets lost."

"We heard her," said Laddie. "But I thought it was a little boy."

"And I thought it was a little girl," added Violet.

Mun Bun and Margy didn't say anything. They just stood and looked at the green parrot on Mr. Hixon's finger. The bird seemed happy now, and bent its head over toward its owner.

"She wants it scratched," said Mr. Hixon. "Well, I'll be nice to you now, but I won't like you if you get out of your cage again," he said. "She can open the door herself," he explained to Grandma Bell and Mrs. Bunker.

"She talks very plainly for a parrot," said Grandma Bell. "I remember the day the six little Bunkers first came, and Polly was in the back of the auto. We thought it was a child then."

"Yes, Polly is a good talker," said Mr. Hixon, who lived not far from Grandma Bell's. "But I think I'll have to get her a new cage so she can't get out. It keeps me busy chasing after her."

"Polly wants a cracker! Polly wants a sweet cracker!" chanted the parrot.

"Well, you'll get a sour one if you aren't good!" said Mr. Hixon, with a laugh. "I'm sorry my parrot fooled you, and made you think a child was lost in the woods," he went on.

"Oh, that's all right," said Mother Bunker. "We didn't mind hunting, and we're glad no one was lost."

"How are all the six little Bunkers?" asked the owner of the green parrot, as he started for his home.

"Well, these four, as you see, are fine," said Grandma Bell. "The other two, Russ and Rose, are playing steamboat on the lake. But I am going to lose them all."

"Lose them all!" cried Mr. Hixon. "How's that?"

"We are going to pay a visit to Mr. Bunker's sister, who lives in Boston," explained Mrs. Bunker. "She wrote and asked us to come, and this is our last week at Grandma Bell's."

"Well, I'm sure we'll miss the six little Bunkers when they go," said Mr. Hixon.

"Indeed we shall!" said Grandma Bell. "But they are coming to see me again."

"We love it here," put in Vi.

"And we've had lots of fun," added Margy.

"Maybe we'll have fun at Aunt Jo's," said Laddie.

"I'm sure you will. I guess you could have fun anywhere, you six," said Mr. Hixon with a laugh. "Well, good-bye, if I don't see you again!"

"Good-bye!" said the others.

"Good-bye," echoed the parrot.

Grandma Bell, Mother Bunker and the four children went back to the shady cove of the lake.

"Where'd you go?" asked Russ and Rose, who were walking along to meet them.

"Oh, we thought somebody was lost in the woods," answered Laddie.

"But it was Mr. Hixon's parrot," added Vi.

The children went back to their play.

A day or so later they helped pack the things they had brought with them to Grandma Bell's.

"We're going to Aunt Jo's! We're going to Aunt Jo's!" shouted Rose, dancing about.

"In Boston! In Boston!" added Russ. "And we'll have Boston baked beans!"

The next day the children said good-bye to Grandma Bell and, with Daddy and Mother Bunker, started for Aunt Jo's. They hardly even dreamed of all the good times they were to have there, nor of the strange things that were to happen.

CHAPTER III

ON THE BOAT

From Grandma Bell's home, near Lake Sagatook, the six little Bunkers, with their father and mother, were taken to the railroad station in a big automobile. As the children looked back, waving their hands to their dear grandmother, who had made their visit such a pleasant one, Russ said:

"Oh, dear!"

"What's the matter?" asked his father. "You seem sad."

"I wish we could take that nice lake with us," explained Russ. "We had such fun there."

"And the boat, too," added Rose. "Can we have a boat at Aunt Jo's, Daddy?"

"I hardly think so," answered Mr. Bunker with a smile. "Aunt Jo lives in the city—in Boston, in the Back Bay section, and I hardly

think there is a place there where you can paddle a raft."

"Can we go wadin'?" asked Laddie.

"Not unless there is a little lake in some park near by," his father answered.

"Couldn't we wait for it to rain and make a mud puddle?" asked Vi. "We could wade in that! We do when we're home!"

"But Boston isn't home. And you can't do in a big city the things you can do at home in Pineville," said Mrs. Bunker, as the automobile chugged along through the woods.

"Can't we have *any* fun?" asked Russ.

"Oh, yes, lots of fun," his father replied. "Aunt Jo wouldn't ask us to spend two weeks or more at her house, if she didn't know you children could have fun, even if she does live in a city. Don't worry about that—you'll have fun."

"But we can't have a boat," sighed Rose. She and the other children loved the water, and, living so near Rainbow River as they did, they were used to paddling about, playing with make-believe boats and toys like that.

"Well, if you can't have a boat at Aunt

Jo's in Boston, you are going to ride on one before you get to her house," said Mother Bunker with a smile.

"Are we?" cried Russ and Rose together.

"Yes. Didn't I tell you about that?" asked Daddy Bunker. "We are going to Boston by boat, instead of by train. That is, we are going most of the way by boat."

"Where is there any water for a boat?" asked Vi, looking around in the woods through which they were riding. "You can't make a boat go lessen you have water."

"Oh, I know. Yes, you can! Yes, you can!" suddenly cried Laddie.

"How can you?" asked Russ. "You can't sail a boat without water."

"Yes, you can!" said Laddie again, and he was laughing now. "I just thought of a riddle. This is it. What kind of a boat can you sail without water? It's a riddle!"

"Huh! I should say it *was*! Nobody could answer a riddle like *that!*" declared Russ.

"Yes, they can!" insisted Laddie. "It's a riddle! And I made it up all by myself. Nobody told me, and I know the answer."

"Well, that's more than I do," said Mrs. Bunker with a laugh. "Suppose you tell us, Laddie."

"And then Daddy can tell us about the boat we're going to ride on to Aunt Jo's," suggested Rose.

"Yes, I'll do that," said Mr. Bunker. "Go on, Laddie. What is the riddle you thought of?"

"What kind of a boat don't have to go in water?" asked the little boy, his eyes shining, for he loved to make up riddles.

"Well, go on. Tell us the answer," said his mother.

"It's a gravy boat!" laughed Laddie. "You know, a gravy boat. It's the kind of a dish we have on the table, with gravy in it, for your bread. You don't have to put *that* kind of a boat in water."

"That's right! You don't," said Mr. Bunker. "That was a good riddle, Laddie."

"And maybe I could think up another one," went on the little boy. "I almost got one. It's about what makes bread always fall with the butter-side down. But I haven't thought of the answer yet."

"Well, don't tell us any more riddles now," said Russ. "We want to hear about the boat we're going to ride on to Aunt Jo's. Tell us, Daddy."

"All right, I will," promised the children's father.

Then he went on to tell that, by taking a train to a station on the coast, they could get a boat that would take them to Boston.

"We shall have to travel all night though, just as we did in the sleeping-car," said Mr. Bunker.

"Why?" asked Vi.

"Because it will take that long to reach Boston," explained her father.

Rose had quite a large doll, her best one, which she carried with her in her arms whenever the family went traveling. Rose had brought her doll to Grandma Bell's and something funny had happened to the doll in the sleeping-car. You may read about it in the book before this one.

"I must see if my doll is asleep," said Rose.

She had put her toy in a cosy corner of the auto seat, and covered her with a blanket.

But when Rose went to look for Sue, as she called her doll, Sue was not to be found.

"Oh! Sue's gone! Sue's gone!" cried Rose. "Somebody has taken my Sue!"

"Who did?" asked Vi.

"Are you sure she hasn't fallen to the floor of the car?" asked Mrs. Bunker.

"No, she isn't here at all," wailed Rose.

"Maybe you didn't bring her. Perhaps you left her at Grandma Bell's," said Mr. Bunker.

"Oh, no! I'm sure I had her," sobbed Rose. "Don't you all 'member that I held her up and wiggled her hand at grandma to say good-bye?"

"Yes, I do remember that," said Mrs. Bunker. "Rose surely had her doll when we started. Have any of you children seen Sue?" she asked.

None of them had, and then Daddy Bunker called to the man driving the auto to stop.

"What are you going to do?" asked Mrs. Bunker.

"I thought I'd walk back a little way and see if Sue had not dropped out along the road," answered her husband.

"Have we got time for that? Won't the train go?"

"Well, we've got a little time," said the driver. "I'll get out and help you look, Mr. Bunker."

"Why'd you lose Sue, Rose?" asked Vi.

"Why, Vi Bunker, I didn't mean to lose her!" exclaimed Rose.

Rose was still searching among the blankets, hoping that, somehow or other, the doll might be found, and her father and Mr. Mead, the auto driver, were getting out, when they heard a shout behind them.

"That's some one calling," said Mrs. Bunker.

They looked and saw riding toward them a boy on a bicycle. He had something in one hand, and clung to the steering bars with the other.

"Oh, he has my doll! He has my doll! I can see Sue!" cried Rose, clapping her hands in joy. "He found her!"

"I do believe he has the child's doll," said Mother Bunker.

"But where did he get her?" asked Vi.

"He must have picked her up along the

road after she slipped out of the auto," answered Mrs. Bunker.

By this time the boy on the bicycle had caught up to the auto, which had stopped in a shady place.

"This doll dropped out of your car in front of our house," panted the bicycle boy. "I saw it fall, and I picked it up and rode after you. But I had hard work to catch you."

"I'm glad you did catch us," said Mr. Bunker, taking the doll from the boy's hand. "You had quite a ride. Aren't you tired?"

"Oh, I'm a little tired, but not much," said the boy. "The doll is all right. She had a little dust on her, but I brushed it off."

"I'm ever so much obliged to you," said Mr. Bunker.

"Thank you—a whole lot!" murmured Rose. "I was 'fraid my doll was lost forever."

"And here is something for your trouble," said Mr. Bunker, giving the boy a silver quarter.

"Oh, I don't want to take it!" he said, backing away.

"Of course you must take it!" insisted

Rose's father. "You had a hard ride to bring the doll back to us, and you saved us a long walk to look for her. Take the money and get yourself something with it."

"All right. Thank you," said the boy, blushing a little under his tan. "I'll get me a new knife. I want a knife a lot. My old one's no good."

Then the boy told of having seen the doll bounce out of the automobile as it went past his house. He had called, but the machine made such a noise, and the six little Bunkers were probably talking so much, that no one heard the lad.

So he picked up Sue from the road and hurried on after the car.

"And I never want to lose you again," said Rose, as she hugged her doll close in her arms.

Mr. Bunker and Mr. Mead got back into the auto, and they set off again, Rose and the children waving good-bye to the boy, who stood near his bicycle, looking at the silver quarter in his hand.

"Why'd you give the boy a quarter, Daddy?" asked Vi. But that was one ques-

tion too many from Vi, and her father did not explain.

A little later the Bunkers reached the railroad station, without losing anything more, and they were soon on their way to take the boat for Boston.

They had had much fun in Maine, at Lake Sagatook, but just as good times were ahead of them, they all felt.

It was evening when they went aboard the big steamer that was to take them to Boston. The children were rather tired from the day's journey in automobile and train.

"I guess we'll all be glad to get into our little beds," said Mother Bunker, as they went to their staterooms, there being two, one next to the other. "Now let me count noses, to make sure you're all here," she went on. "Russ, Rose, Laddie, Vi, Mun Bun—Where is Margy?" she suddenly cried, as she missed the little girl. "Margy isn't here! Where is she?"

It was true. Margy wasn't with the other little Bunkers. There were only five in sight!

CHAPTER IV

IN BOSTON

DADDY BUNKER and Mother Bunker were used to having things happen to the six little Bunkers. Not that they liked to have things happen—that is, unpleasant things—but the father and the mother knew they could not travel around with half a dozen children and not find a bit of trouble now and then.

And now trouble had come! Margy was not to be found!

"I'm sure she came on the boat with us," said Daddy Bunker.

"Yes, I know that," said his wife, as she looked quickly around the deck. "I saw her with the rest not a minute ago."

"Then where can she have gone?" asked Mr. Bunker. "As the steamer has not moved away from the dock, maybe she ran back to shore to get something, or look at something."

"Why'd Margy go away?" asked Vi.

"Margy is too little to go off by herself," said Mrs. Bunker.

"Do you mean some one took her—maybe a gypsy?" asked Russ.

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Rose. "Are there gypsies here?"

"Nonsense! Of course not!" answered Mr. Bunker, seeing that what Russ had said might frighten the children. "No one has taken Margy. Maybe she is just playing hide-and-go-seek!"

Mr. Bunker didn't really believe Margy was doing this, but he said it to make the children feel better.

"You take the children down to the stateroom," said Mr. Bunker to his wife, "and I'll look for Margy. I'll find her in a jiffy, which is very quick time, indeed," he told the children. "Run along now, Mun Bun, and you too, Vi and Laddie. Rose, you go with your mother and help take care of Mun Bun."

"Shall I come with you, Daddy?" asked Russ.

"Yes," answered Mr. Bunker, "you may come with me, Russ. You can run faster

than I can, and if we find Margy playing tag with some of the other little boys and girls on the steamer you can catch her more easily than I can."

Mr. Bunker said this for fun. He didn't really think Margy was playing tag. But he had to say something so the others would not be frightened. And, to tell the truth, Mr. Bunker was a little bit frightened himself, and so was his wife.

"Where do you suppose Margy can be?" Mrs. Bunker asked her husband, as she started down the stairs for the staterooms, or bedrooms, where they were to spend the night.

"Oh, she's around somewhere," he answered. "She may be watching the men load the steamer." Boxes and barrels were still being put into the hold, or "cellar," of the steamer, which would soon start for Boston. Margy, from the upper deck, might have seen this work going on, and have stepped out of sight to watch.

"Come on, Russ, we'll find her," said Mr. Bunker.

Many people were now coming on board

the steamer. There were some boys and girls, and certainly a number of them were tired and sleepy. As Mrs. Bunker went down the stairs with the four little Bunkers, she looked at every other child she saw, hoping it might be Margy. But she did not see her smallest daughter.

Russ and his father walked around the upper deck. They met several men who worked on the steamer, and asked them if they had seen a little girl about five years old, with dark hair and eyes, for that is how Margy looked.

Each of the men Mr. Bunker asked said he had not seen the little lost girl, and then Mr. Bunker said:

"Well, Russ, we'll go down on the next deck. Maybe she is there."

There were several decks to the steamer, just as there are several floors in a large house. Russ and his father went downstairs, and as they started to look on the lower deck they met a man who had shiny gold braid on the sleeves of his coat, and also on his cap.

"Are you looking for some one?" asked

this man, who was a mate, or helper, to the captain.

"We are looking for my little girl," said Mr. Bunker. "She has wandered awa" since we came on board."

"Was she a very little girl?" asked the ate.

"Rather small," answered Daddy Bunker.

"And did she have dark hair?"

"Yes!" exclaimed Russ eagerly. "Oh, have you seen her? She's my sister Margy."

"Well, I just happened to pass a stateroom, where I chance to know no little girl belongs on this trip. The door was open, and I looked in," went on the mate. "On the bunk, which is what we call the beds on a steamer," he told Russ, "I saw a little girl with dark hair curled up in a heap. She seemed to be asleep, and there was a little white poodle dog with her."

"A little white poodle dog!" exclaimed Mr. Bunker. "Then I'm afraid it can't be my little girl. We have no white poodle dog."

"Maybe Margy found one, Daddy, and that's why she didn't come with us," said Russ.

"Better take a look at this little girl," went on the mate. "She seems to be all alone in this stateroom, and she may be yours."

"We'll look," said Mr. Bunker. "But I hardly think it can be Margy."

He followed the mate, holding Russ by the hand so the little boy would not get lost, though Russ was almost too big for this.

"Here she is," said the mate, as he came to a stop at an open door of a stateroom. And there, on the clean, white bunk, curled up with one arm around a white poodle dog was a little girl, whose dark hair mingled with the white coat of the poodle.

"Oh, it is Margy!" exclaimed Russ.

"Yes, so it is," said Mr. Bunker. "Thank you," he added to the captain's helper. "Now we are all right. We have found our lost little girl."

"I was wondering to whom she belonged," said the mate. "And I was going to tell the captain about her. Now I won't have to."

When Mr. Bunker and Russ went into the room, the little poodle dog raised up his head, opened one eye, and wagged his little stump of a tail, as if he were saying:

"It's all right. You don't need to worry. I'm taking care of Margy and she's taking care of me."

And it was Margy asleep in the bunk! Poor, tired, sleepy little Margy Bunker.

"My dear little girl," said Daddy Bunker softly, as he took her up in his arms. "We were so worried about you. Where have you been?"

"I—I founded a little dog," said Margy sleepily, as she put her head down on her father's shoulder. "He was a little white dog an' I loved him an' I went with him an' we went to—went to—we——"

And then Margy herself went to where she was trying to tell her daddy she had gone—to sleep.

"We'll ask her about it in the morning," said Mr. Bunker. "I'll carry her to her mother now, so she won't be anxious any more."

Margy was in slumberland once more, and so was the little white poodle dog. He just looked up, with one eye, when he saw Mr. Bunker carrying his little girl away, and then doggie went to sleep again also.

"Aren't you glad we found Margy?" asked Russ, as he walked back with his father to where Mrs. Bunker and the other children were waiting.

"Indeed I am," said Margy's daddy.

"Where was she?" asked Mrs. Bunker, as she saw her lost little girl.

"She had wandered into some other stateroom, and had gone to sleep," Mr. Bunker answered.

"And the little poodle dog was asleep with her," added Russ.

"Where's the little poodle dog?" demanded Laddie, who was almost asleep himself.

"Oh, we couldn't bring him," Russ said. And then his father told how Margy had been found.

The little girl was still too sleepy to talk, so her mother undressed her and put her to bed.

"We can ask her in the morning what happened," she said.

Now the six little Bunkers were together again, and happy once more, and Mr. and Mrs. Bunker were no longer worried. They all went to bed, and then the steamer trav-

eled through the night, getting to Boston the next day.

The children were awake early, and when they were dressed they went out on deck. They had breakfast on board, in the big dining-saloon.

"When shall we get to Aunt Jo's?" asked Rose, as she helped her mother pick up some of the things the other children had scattered about the stateroom.

"We'll be there in time for dinner," said Mr. Bunker. "But we haven't yet heard what happened to Margy. Why did you go to sleep in the strange bed?" he asked his little girl.

"'Cause I wanted the doggie," she answered. And then she told how it had happened, though they had to ask her many questions to get the whole story.

Soon after coming on board the steamer Margy, walking a little distance apart from the other little Bunkers, had seen the white poodle dog running about the deck. She made friends with him, and when the dog, who belonged to an elderly lady passenger, went off by himself, Margy followed.

The poodle went into the stateroom where his mistress was to sleep, and jumped up on the bed. Margy did the same thing, and then they both fell asleep. Through the open door the mate saw them and then Mr. Bunker came and got his little girl.

"But you mustn't do it again, Margy," he said.

"No, Daddy. I won't," she promised. "But he was an awful nice little dog."

"Could we have him?" Mun Bun wanted to know, for they had seen the white poodle running about the deck that morning.

"Oh, no," replied Mrs. Bunker. "We're going to Aunt Jo's, and she may have a dog herself."

"That'll be fun!" laughed Margy. "I likes a dog!"

"Has Aunt Jo a dog, really?" asked Vi

"Well, maybe," returned her mother.

A little later the six little Bunkers were riding through the Boston streets on their way to Aunt Jo's house.

CHAPTER V

ALEXIS IS SPLASHED

"WELL, well! Oh, I'm *so* glad to see you! Now stand still, please, while I look at you to make sure you're all here!"

This is what Aunt Jo said as she stood smiling on the steps of her beautiful house in the fashionable Back Bay section of Boston. The six little Bunkers, with Daddy and Mother, had arrived in a big automobile that Mr. Bunker had engaged at the steamer dock. It needed a large machine to take the whole family, with their baggage, through the city. And when they had rung the bell Aunt Jo was waiting to answer it herself, as she expected her visitors.

"One, two, three, four, five, six!" she counted, pointing her finger, first at Russ, as he was the oldest, and ending with Mun Bun, who was the youngest. "All here! And I'm *so* glad to see you," she went on.

"And we're glad to see you!" added Daddy Bunker as he kissed his sister, for Aunt Jo was his sister, you remember. "I'm afraid you won't find room for us all."

"Oh, yes, I shall," said Aunt Jo, and she laughed and looked so jolly that the six little Bunkers loved her at once. "I've got lots of room in this big house," she went on.

Just then a big dog, the kind called a Great Dane, came stalking into the hall where the Bunker family was gathered. The dog seemed pleased when he saw the children, and wagged his tail.

"I can sleep with the dog if you haven't got room for me anywhere else," said Margy, as she went up to Alexis, which was the dog's name. "I did sleep with a dog on the boat, and he did love me and I did love him."

"Has you got a cat?" asked Mun Bun. "I want to love something, too," and he looked at Aunt Jo with big, round eyes.

"No," answered Daddy's sister, "I haven't a cat, but Alexis is large enough for all you six little Bunkers to love, I guess," and truly the Great Dane seemed so.

"What makes Alexis so big?" asked Vi.

"Because he's a Great Dane."

"What makes a Great Dane be so big?"

"Vi, Vi!" protested her mother. "Don't ask any more questions now."

"But come in and get your things off," went on Aunt Jo. "I'm keeping you standing in the hall as if I didn't have room for you inside. Come in, make yourselves at home and I'll have Parker hurry the lunch. You must be starved."

"We had breakfast, but it wasn't much," said Russ. "I guess it's on account of war times." Russ had really eaten a big breakfast, but, of course, that had been a long time before.

"Well, of course we must all help with the war," said Aunt Jo, "but I think Parker can give you enough to eat."

"Is Parker a cat?" asked Vi.

"Oh, no!" laughed Aunt Jo. "Parker is my cook. I call her by her last name instead of her first name, as it is the same as mine. Parker is a very good cook, you'll find."

"If Parker was a cat maybe I could think up a riddle about her," put in Laddie. "Anyhow, I know a new riddle, Aunt Jo."

"Do you? Well, I must hear it," she said, as she opened the door to the sitting-room.

"Oh, Laddie, can't you wait to ask riddles until we get our things off?" asked his mother.

"I—I'm afraid I might forget it," said the little boy. "It's a hard riddle."

"Well, let me hear it," said Aunt Jo with a laugh. "I used to be pretty good at guessing them."

"This is it," said Laddie. "I didn't make it up, but I asked one of the sailors on the steamer for a good riddle, and he told me this one. It's, 'What can you put in your left hand that you can't put in your right hand?' That's the riddle."

"Pooh! there can't be any answer to that," said Russ. "If you can put anything in your left hand you can put it in your right, too. Look!"

He took his knife from his pocket, and put it first in his right hand and then in his left.

"But I don't mean a knife," said Laddie. "'Tisn't what you *can* put in both hands, it's what you *can't*."

"Let me hear the riddle again," begged Aunt Jo.

"What can you put in your left hand that you *can't* put in your right?" asked Laddie. "It's awful hard—you'll never guess it," he went on, laughing at the puzzled look on Aunt Jo's face.

They all tried to guess the riddle—that is all except the smallest children—Mun Bun and Margy, and they were too much taken up with loving the dog Alexis. Aunt Jo tried several things, but she found she could put them in one hand as easily as she could in the other, so that couldn't be the answer.

"Do you give up?" asked Laddie.

"Yes," said his father, "we all give up. Tell us the answer."

"It's your right elbow," said the little boy with a laugh.

"Your right elbow?" cried Russ.

"Yes," Laddie went on. "Look! You can hold your right elbow in your left hand, but you can't put your *right* elbow in your *right* hand. Nobody can!"

And, surely enough, when they tried, no one could do it. And you can quickly prove

it for yourself to make sure Laddie was right. You can easily rest your *right* elbow in the palm of your *left* hand. But try to put your *left* elbow in your *left* hand, or the *right* elbow in the *right* hand, and see how hard it is.

"Well, that's a good riddle!" laughed Aunt Jo. "I shall have to put on my thinking cap when you ask me any more, Laddie."

"Oh, I know *lots* more riddles," cried Laddie eagerly. "Some I made up myself. I know one about why don't the railroad tickets get mad when the conductor punches 'em, but I never can think of an answer for that riddle."

"Well, a riddle isn't much fun unless you know the answer," agreed Aunt Jo. "And now I'll show you to your rooms, and you can get ready for lunch."

They went upstairs, Alexis following, for he seemed to like children. And the six little Bunkers certainly liked the big dog.

"Does he like dolls?" asked Rose, as she held her Sue close in her arms.

"Well, I never saw him bite any," said Aunt Jo.

"I don't want to put my doll down where he could get her if he would carry her off," went on the little girl.

"Would Alexis do *that?*" asked Vi.

"No, I don't believe Alexis would hurt the doll," said Aunt Jo. "Here, we will try him. Come to me, Alexis!" she called.

The dog managed to get away from Mun Bun and Margy, who were trying to see who could hug him the hardest, and he stood near his mistress.

"Do you see this doll, Alexis?" went on Aunt Jo, holding Sue out for him to see. "Look at her!"

"Bow-wow!" barked Alexis, and that meant: "Yes, I see her, what about it?"

"You must be very nice to her, and not chew her nor carry her off and put her in some hiding-place, as you do your bones," went on Aunt Jo. Alexis waved his big tail, sniffed at Rose's doll, and then barked again.

"He will never hurt your toy, Rose," said Aunt Jo. "You may safely leave her anywhere in the house."

"She's my best doll, and she's been lost in the woods and had lots of adventures," Rose

said. "But I wouldn't like a dog to carry her off—'specially not such a big dog."

"Well, don't worry about Alexis," said Aunt Jo. "He won't hurt your Sue."

The visitors were shown to their different rooms, and their baggage was carried up so the children could change their clothes.

"Why do we have to change our clothes?" asked Vi.

"We want to put on some old things so we can have some fun," returned Russ.

"Can we sail a boat anywhere around here?" asked Laddie.

"I'm afraid not," said Aunt Jo. "You see this is a big city, and not the country, as at Grandma Bell's, where you have been staying. True, we are near the bay, but you couldn't very well sail boats there. I shall have to think up some other fun for you."

"We like fun," added Violet.

By this time Mun Bun and Margy had been fitted out with their "play clothes" as they called them; clothes that could not easily be soiled. Russ and Rose had dressed themselves, and Mrs. Bunker was seeing to Laddie and Violet.

"And when you're all ready I'll have Parker serve the lunch," said Aunt Jo. "If you'll just excuse me now, I'll run down and see about it," she added to her brother.

"Go ahead," said he. "We'll be right down."

"Can Alexis stay up here with us?" asked Mun Bun.

"Oh, yes, he likes to be with children," said Miss Bunker, for that really was Aunt Jo's name, she being Daddy Bunker's sister.

So Aunt Jo went downstairs to see that the cook got a nice lunch ready for the six little Bunkers.

Mr. and Mrs. Bunker, now that they had the children ready, could stop and "get their breaths," as Mother Bunker said. Really it is a good deal of work to look after six children.

"Come on!" called Daddy Bunker, when he had helped his wife put the baggage away in the rooms they were to have while at Aunt Jo's house. "Come down to lunch, children!"

Russ, Rose, Violet and Laddie came from the windows, out of which they had been looking at scenes in the street.

"Where is Mun Bun?" asked Mrs. Bunker.

"And Margy?" added her husband.

"I saw 'em a minute ago," answered Rose.

And just then, from down the hall, came strange sounds.

"Now it's my turn, Mun Bun! It's my turn to splash him!" shouted Margy.

"No, it's mine!" insisted her brother. "You splashed him a lot, an' I'm goin' to do it now. You let me pull it!"

"Oh, what are those children doing now?" asked Mrs. Bunker.

"I'll go and see," offered her husband.

And then, from a room down the hall, came the sound of splashing water and the barking of Alexis, the big dog, while Mun Bun could be heard calling:

"Let me pull it! Let me pull it! I want to splash him, too!"

"What are Mun and Margy Bunker doing?" asked Vi.

CHAPTER VI

THE POCKETBOOK

"WHERE are they?" asked Daddy Bunker, looking at his wife.

"They must be in the bathroom," she answered. "Oh, do go and look please, and see what is happening."

"What is it? May I go and see?" cried Vi, going toward the bathroom without waiting to have her questions answered.

Mr. Bunker ran down the hall. The bathroom door was open and within he saw a strange sight.

Mun Bun and Margy had, somehow or other, got the big dog Alexis to jump into the bathtub. Perhaps the dog had done it before. Anyhow he was in it now, and, as he stood there, Margy and Mun Bun were having a sort of tug of war to see who should pull the handle of the chain that worked the shower bath.

DOWN THE WATER CAME, SPLASHING ON ALEXIS.

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Margy had her chubby fists on the handle, and she was pulling, but Mun Bun was trying to pull her hands away so he could take hold of the chain himself. So the pull of the two children was enough to make the water spurt out from the overhead shower. Down the water came, splashing on Alexis, but he seemed to like it. He barked, but not too loudly, and wagged his tail.

"Mun Bun! Margy! What in the world are you doing?" cried their father. Of course he could see, perfectly well, what they were doing, but, somehow or other, that seemed the most natural thing to ask.

"What are you doing?" he cried.

"We're splashing Alexis," said Margy.

"It's my turn to do it, but she won't let me," complained Mun Bun. "She's splashed him a lot, and now I want to."

"You mustn't either of you splash Alexis any more like this!" exclaimed Mr. Bunker, wanting to laugh at the funny sight, but really not daring to, lest the children try it again some time.

"Stop it at once," he said. "Turn that water off, Mun Bun!"

"I'm not pulling it—it's Margy!" said the little boy.

"Both of you stop!" commanded their father. "Come here, Alexis!" he called, and the big dog jumped out of the bathtub. Luckily the floor of the room was of white tile, so the water that dripped on it from the dog did no harm. But when he gave himself a shake, as dogs always do when they come out of water, the drops splashed on the two children and also on Mr. Bunker.

"Oh! Oh!" cried Mun Bun. "I'm—I'm all wet!"

"So'm I!" added Margy. She had let go of the shower-bath chain, and the water no longer ran out.

"Alexis got me wet, too," said Daddy Bunker. "But you children should not have done this. It was very wrong."

"But Alexis was very hot," said Margy. "His tongue was stickin' out of his mouth just like Grandma's dog Zip's used to, and so we wanted to cool him off; didn't we, Mun Bun?"

"Yes, we did," answered the little boy. "So I told him to get into the bathtub, and we

pulled the chain and the water splashed out on him."

"I should say it *did* splash!" exclaimed Mr. Bunker, trying not to laugh. "I don't know what Aunt Jo will say."

"Well, she said she wanted us to have fun," went on Margy, "and we did have fun, and Alexis liked it."

"Perhaps he did," said her father, for the dog did not seem to mind being wet. "But it was very wrong to do it. You children are very wet."

"Did anything happen?" asked Mrs. Bunker, as she came down the hall toward the bathroom, with Russ, Rose and Laddie.

"Well, lots happened, but nothing very bad," said her husband. "Alexis had his bath, that's all."

"Oh, my dears!" cried Mrs. Bunker, when she saw the splashed bathroom and how wet the two children were. "How *could* you do it?"

"I'll show you how to do it!" exclaimed Mun Bun, not exactly knowing what his mother meant. "This is how!" and he reached for the handle of the shower-bath chain. But

his father caught him just in time to stop him from splashing any more water about.

"It is a good thing I changed their clothes," said Mrs. Bunker. "Poor Alexis! Did you think it was raining?" she asked, as she patted the dog's wet head.

But the Great Dane did not seem to mind. He wagged his tail joyfully, and, after all, the day was a hot one.

"Don't mind about a little water, as long as the children are all right," said Aunt Jo, when she heard what had happened. "Alexis loves to get a bath, but he is generally washed out in the garage by William, the man who attends to the car. I had never put him in a bathtub, but I suppose he liked it."

"He waggled his tail like anything," said Mun Bun.

"Well, then that's a sure sign he was pleased," said Aunt Jo.

Margy and Mun Bun had been partly dried off in time for lunch, and the six little Bunkers, with the rest of the family, were now at table.

"What we going to do this afternoon?" asked Vi.

"What would you like to do?" inquired her aunt with a smile.

"Well, I'd like to see something," Russ put in.

"I want to see some cows and sheep," added Laddie. "Maybe I could think up a riddle about them if I was to see some. We had some at Grandma Bell's."

"And he gave 'em sugar 'stid of salt," said Russ with a laugh.

"Well, they liked it," Laddie declared. "Only the old ram—*he* wasn't nice!"

"I'm sorry, but there aren't any sheep or cows around here," said Aunt Jo with a smile. "You must remember that this is a city, and not the country. But there are many things to see here. We can go to visit Bunker Hill Monument, and we can go on excursions to Nantasket Beach—oh, we can do lots of things to have fun!"

"That's good!" murmured Rose. "I think I'd like to go for a walk, and see things."

"So would I," agreed her mother. "If you like, Rose, you and I will take a walk. I want to get a few things from the store."

"Well, you can do that," said Daddy

Bunker, "and I'll stay here with Aunt Jo and look after the children. I'm afraid even five little Bunkers will be too much for her to manage."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Aunt Jo. "I love children!"

She had never had any of her own, being unmarried, but no mother could have been more kind nor have loved children any more than did Aunt Jo.

"Well, if mother and Rose go downtown for a walk, we'll stay here and look around a bit," said Daddy Bunker.

"And maybe I can find something to make," said Russ, as he walked about, whistling his shrillest. Russ was not quite happy unless he was making something, whether it was whittling a sword out of a piece of wood, or building an airship.

So, while Daddy Bunker took the children out into Aunt Jo's back yard—and she had a large one, for which the boys and girls were very glad—Mrs. Bunker and Rose got ready to go shopping.

At one end of the yard was the garage for the automobile. The reason she had not sent

it to the dock to meet her brother and the children when the boat came in was that she did not know at just what hour they would arrive.

Working around the garage was William, the chauffeur, who also helped about the house, taking out the ashes in winter and cutting the grass in summer.

"We've a man named Jerry Simms who does that at our house," said Russ, when he learned what William did for Aunt Jo. "Jerry is a soldier, or he was. Are you a soldier, Mr. William?"

"No, but I may be, some day," he answered.

"Have you got any corn shuckers here?" asked Laddie.

"A corn shucker? No. What's that?"

"Well, it's a thing, and you put ears of corn in a spout and turn a wheel and the kernels of corn come out of one end, and the empty cob comes out of the other end. Grandma Bell's got one."

"And we put Rose's doll in and shucked off all her buttons," added Russ.

"That's what they did," said Daddy Bunker. "I'm glad you haven't one here,

William. Rose didn't like it when all the buttons came off her doll."

"But it was lots of fun," added Laddie. "Maybe I could think up a riddle about a corn shucker, if I tried real hard."

"Oh, look! Here's a hose!" cried Russ, as he saw one with which William had been washing the automobile. "May we squirt it?"

"I'm afraid you'll get wet," said the chauffeur, with a look at Mr. Bunker.

"A little water won't hurt them," said the children's father. "They have on their old clothes. But perhaps you don't want them to take it."

"Oh, I was going to water the lawn, anyhow," said William; "and I'd just as soon they would do it if you don't mind."

"Hurray!" cried Laddie.

"I'm going to have first turn at squirting!" insisted Russ.

Their father settled this little dispute by saying that Vi and the two older boys might have the hose for five minutes at a time, and he would stay near by to see that everything was fair. So Laddie and Russ and Vi began to sprinkle the lawn, while Margy and Mun

Bun found a pile of clean sand near the garage, where they could play.

And now I must tell you something that happened to Rose and her mother. They were walking down one of the Boston streets, after having bought some things in one of the stores, when Rose, who was walking a little ahead of her mother, suddenly called:

"Look! Look, Mother!"

"What is it?" asked Mrs. Bunker.

"It's a pocketbook," went on Rose, pointing to one on the sidewalk. "And it looks as if it had money in it. Shall I pick it up, Mother?"

"Yes. Why not?" said Mrs. Bunker, glancing about, and seeing no one who might have dropped it. "Why shouldn't you pick it up, Rose?"

"'Cause maybe it's an April fool one, and somebody will pull it away with a string," the little girl answered.

CHAPTER VII

A SAD LETTER

April fool was something Mrs. Bunker had not thought of as she looked at the pocketbook lying on the sidewalk. As Rose had said, it did seem to have money in it, but perhaps it might be stuffed with paper.

Then, too, there might be a string tied to the wallet, and boys, hidden somewhere near, might pull on the string and yank the pocketbook away just as soon as any one stooped over to pick it up. Still Mrs. Bunker said to Rose:

"This is too late for April fool. This is August, and no boys would think of playing such tricks now."

"Maybe not, Mother," Rose agreed. "I just thought maybe that was what it was there for. But I'll pick it up. I hope it's got a lot of money in it!"

With shining eyes Rose stooped to pick up the purse.

"Open it, Rose, and see what is inside," said Mrs. Bunker. "We may find out the name of the owner, and, if she lives around here—for it looks like a lady's pocketbook—we can take it to her."

"But we don't know the streets, Mother," said Rose.

"We can ask a policeman. If we find the name of the owner, and it is too far for us to go where she lives, we can give the pocketbook to the policeman and he will deliver it for us. But open it and see what is in it," returned Mrs. Bunker.

The pocketbook opened easily enough, and as Rose turned back the flap she gave a cry of surprise.

"What's the matter?" asked the excited child's mother.

"Oh! Oh, it's just *full* of money!" cried the little girl. "It's piled full of money, Mother! Look!"

She hurried to her mother's side with the opened pocketbook. Surely enough, when Mrs. Bunker looked, she saw a roll of green bills.

Just how many were in the pocketbook she could not tell.

"Well, this is quite a find!" said Rose's mother. "The person who lost this will feel bad about it. We must try to find the owner."

"Oh, can't I keep it?" asked Rose.

"Of course not," said her mother. "Whenever we find anything we must try to discover the owner and give the lost thing back. If you lost your doll you'd want whoever found her to give her back; wouldn't you?"

"Oh, of course, Mother! But Sue—she isn't a *pocketbook* full of money."

"No," agreed Mrs. Bunker with a smile. "If Russ were here I suppose he'd say your doll was full of sawdust. However, no matter what it is, we must give back whatever we have found if we can find the owner. Of course, after we have tried hard, if we can't discover who lost whatever we have found, we may keep it."

"How can we tell who lost this pocketbook and all the money?" asked Rose.

"We'll look inside, and we'll also count the money," said her mother.

"Maybe it's a hundred dollars!" exclaimed the little girl, her eyes shining brightly.

"Perhaps it may be," said Mrs. Bunker. "But we won't count it out here on the street. We have nearly finished shopping, so we will take the pocketbook home with us, and show it to Daddy and Aunt Jo."

Rose had the wallet open, looking at the roll of bills inside. Now her mother gently took it from her and closed it.

"What made you do that?" asked Rose.

"Because the wind might blow some of the money out," was the answer, "and then we could not give it all back to the poor person who owns it."

"What makes you think the pocketbook is a poor person's?" asked Rose, who was asking almost as many questions as would her sister Vi had she been there.

"Well, the pocketbook is rather a shabby one, even though it seems to have quite a lot of money in it," said Mrs. Bunker, as she put it away in her own shopping bag. "The leather is worn and it is torn. But we will go over it more carefully when we get home."

Rose could hardly wait to get back to Aunt

Jo's house to look farther into the pocketbook and see what it held. No one on the street had paid the slightest attention to Rose and her mother when the wallet had been found, and no policeman was in sight who could be asked about it. So Mrs. Bunker thought the best thing to do was to take it with her and examine it later.

When Aunt Jo's house was reached Laddie, Vi and Russ had about finished watering the lawn. They had watered themselves a little, also, for they were so eager, and took so many turns with the hose that it splashed on them.

But the day was warm, and, as they had on their old clothes, their father did not mind, as long as they did not get too wet.

"Oh, we had lots of fun!" cried Russ as he saw his mother and Rose coming along.

"We had a dandy time!" added Laddie.

"You don't know what I found!" cried Rose, not thinking so much about her brothers' fun with the hose as she was about what had happened to herself and her mother. "I found something!"

"What?" asked Vi.

"Was it a little kittie?" asked Mun Bun, who, with Margy, had finished playing in the sand pile.

"No, it wasn't a kittie, though I wish I could find one," said Rose.

"Did you find a new riddle?" Laddie wanted to know. He thought more of riddles than of many other things that most boys like.

"No, it wasn't a riddle," answered Rose. "You'd never guess, so I'll tell you. I found a pocketbook, and maybe it's got two hundred dollars in it! So there!"

"Oh, you did not! Did she, Mother?" asked Russ, in surprise at what his sister had said.

"Yes, Rose did find a pocketbook," answered Mrs. Bunker. "It was lying on the sidewalk in front of us. But whether it has two hundred dollars in it, or only one hundred, I don't know yet."

"Where is it? Where is it?" cried Vi over and over.

"In my bag. We really did make quite a find," she went on to her husband and Aunt Jo, who came out on the porch just then.

"Look!" and Mrs. Bunker took the purse out of her shopping bag, handing it over to her husband.

"See if you can find out who owns it," she suggested.

"And if nobody owns it I'm going to keep it for mine," said Rose.

"Can she, Mother?" Russ wanted to know.

"Well, we'll see," said Mrs. Bunker.

Meanwhile her husband was opening the pocketbook. He saw the roll of bills and whistled.

"Well, there's some money here, anyhow," he said. "I'll count it first, so we'll know just how much it is."

Mr. Bunker was used to counting over bills. He could not do it quite as fast, perhaps, as the cashier in a bank, but he soon had spread out the money in a chair in front of him on the porch, and he said:

"There are just sixty-five dollars here."

"Sixty-five!" exclaimed Rose. "I thought it was two hundred."

"Is sixty-five dollars much money?" asked Vi.

"Well, sixty-five dollars is a lot of money

if you lose it," said her father. "And whoever lost this will be very glad to get it back, you may be sure."

"Is there anything else in the pocketbook to tell who may own it?" asked Mrs. Bunker.

"No, there doesn't seem to be anything but just the roll of bills," he answered. "Hold on, though!" he exclaimed, as he looked in another part of the pocketbook, "here is some some sort of a paper."

"That may have the owner's name on it," said Aunt Jo. "I always carry in my purse a slip with my name and address on it, so if I lose my pocketbook whoever finds it will know where to bring it back. Probably that is what this is."

"No, it doesn't seem to be," said Mr. Bunker. "This appears to be part of a letter. Of course it isn't nice to read letters that are for other people, but as we are trying to find out to whom this money and pocketbook belong it will be all right. I'll read this."

He took out a folded paper from a compartment in the pocketbook next to where the money had been, and began to read. He read it aloud. It said:

"Dear Mother: I am so glad you have the sixty-five dollars, for then you will not have to work so hard, and can take a little rest. It was so good of Uncle Jack to send it to you. I feel so much better now that you have this money. You will not have to worry so much. I am working hard myself, but I like it, and I will save all I can and send all I can spare to you. Take good care of the money and don't lose it, for you may never have as much again. I am very lonesome and wish I could see you, but I know the rest will do you good. With lots of love."

"Is that all?" asked Mrs. Bunker, as her husband stopped reading.

"That is all," he said.

"Isn't there any name or address to that little letter?" Aunt Jo wanted to know.

"No, nothing like that," answered her brother. "The only name in it is 'Uncle Jack,' and that might mean anybody. There must have been a name signed to the letter, but it has been torn off. You can see where the paper has been torn across. I don't see

how we can find who owns the money from this letter."

"Maybe there is something else in the pocketbook," said Russ.

Mr. Bunker looked, and did find a Chinese coin with a square hole in it. There was only the letter, addressed to "Dear Mother," and the sixty-five dollars, and the Chinese coin.

"We'll have to put an advertisement in the paper, saying we have found a pocketbook," said Mr. Bunker. "Whoever has lost it will see the advertisement and call here. And we must look in the 'lost and found' advertisements in the paper to-night."

"Yes, we'll do that," said Aunt Jo. "The poor woman must be very sad over her loss. She will be very glad to get it back, and——"

Just then the telephone in Aunt Jo's house gave a loud ring.

"Oh," cried Rose. "Maybe that's some one now to ask about the pocketbook I found. Oh, maybe it is!"

CHAPTER VIII

RUSS MAKES A FOUNTAIN

THE six little Bunkers, as well as their father and mother, waited while Aunt Jo went to answer the telephone, which kept on ringing as though in a hurry. Vi had asked "Who's ringing?" but of course nobody could tell her until Aunt Jo answered the call.

"Yes! What is it?" asked Aunt Jo into the mouthpiece of the instrument, which stood on a table in the sitting-room. "Oh, it's you, is it, Mr. North?" she went on. "What's that? Did we lose anything? No, not that I know of. One of my little guests *found* something, but I haven't heard of anything being lost. Wait a minute, though, until I count noses. I'll see if all the six little Bunkers are here. I might have missed one and not know it."

Laughing, Aunt Jo turned from the telephone to look at the children. They were all

there, from Russ the oldest to Mun Bun the youngest. Then Aunt Jo spoke again into the instrument.

"No, we haven't lost anything," she said. "Oh, you'll bring it over, will you, Mr. North? Thank you!"

"Was it something about the pocketbook?" asked Rose eagerly.

"No, it was nothing like that," answered her aunt. "The gentleman who telephoned was Mr. North, my next-door neighbor. He says he has something belonging to one of you children, and he is going to bring it right over. Did any of you leave out any of your toys when you were playing in the yard?"

"I didn't," said Russ, and none of his brothers or sisters could think of anything of theirs that was missing. In a few minutes the door bell rang, and when this was answered, Mr. North brought in what seemed to be a bundle of rags.

"Your dog Alexis brought this over and left it on my door mat," he said to Aunt Jo.

"Oh, it's my doll Sue!" cried Rose, as she ran forward to take it. "I forgot all about

her. I left her to sleep on the porch in the sun so she would get nice and tanned, as I do when I go to the seashore, and then I went downtown with mother and I forgot all about her."

"Well, I'm glad to bring her back to you," said Mr. North with a smile. "I guess I must have been holding her upside down," and so he had. That was what made Sue look so like a bundle of rags. Really she was a nice doll when she was held right side up.

"It's queer Alexis brought her to your house, instead of in here to me," said Aunt Jo.

"Oh, Alexis and I are great friends," said Mr. North. "He often brings me my paper when the boy leaves it at the front gate instead of walking up to the porch with it, and perhaps your dog might have thought this was a paper, though a very large one," and Mr. North smiled at Rose.

Mr. North had been introduced to the six little Bunkers, and also to Daddy and Mother Bunker, when he entered, and he stayed some little time, talking with them, for he liked

children, though all his were grown into big boys and girls now.

"I found a pocketbook," said Rose, when she had got over her first bit of shyness sufficiently to talk to the visitor.

"Did you, indeed? Well, you are lucky!" said Mr. North. Then he was told about the sixty-five dollars, and shown the sad letter in the pocketbook.

"We are going to put an advertisement in the paper," said Aunt Jo. "And if you hear of any poor woman who has lost this sum of money, or read about any in the paper, I wish you would tell us."

"I will," promised Mr. North. "Well, Rose, you have had quite an experience almost as soon as you come to Boston. What are you children going to do the rest of your stay here?"

"I'm afraid I won't know how to provide fun for so many of them," said Aunt Jo. "I want them to have a good time, and remember their visit pleasantly, but I have no toys for girls and boys——"

"That's just what I was going to speak about," said Mr. North. "There is an ex-

press wagon in my barn, and an old velocipede, as well as a coaster wagon. They used to belong to my youngsters, but they have outgrown them. If the six little Bunkers would like to play with those toys they are very welcome."

"That will be splendid!" cried Aunt Jo. "I was just wondering what I could do to amuse Russ and the others, for I haven't any things that children like, and we can't go on sight-seeing trips or excursions all the while, though we will go on some. The toys you have, Mr. North, will be just the thing."

And indeed they did prove so. The next day Russ and his brothers and sisters went over to Mr. North's barn. It was an old-fashioned one, the kind horses and carriages used to be kept in before there were automobiles. Mr. North also had a garage for his cars, but the old barn stood far back in his yard, which was a large one next to Aunt Jo's, and in it were the velocipede, the express wagon, a coaster wagon and other things with which to have fun.

"Oh, we can have jolly good times now!" cried Russ.

"And I can give my doll a ride, after Alexis carried her in his teeth," put in Rose.

"Can't we have rides, too?" asked Vi.

"'Course you can," answered Russ. "I'll give you a nice ride."

And then, while Aunt Jo and Mother Bunker went to a Red Cross meeting and while Daddy Bunker went downtown to put an advertisement in the paper about the pocketbook Rose had found, the children played around Mr. North's barn and Aunt Jo's yard.

"Will it be all right to leave them while we go out?" asked Aunt Jo of Mrs. Bunker.

"Oh, yes, as long as your man, William, and your cook, Parker, and your housemaid, Anne, are around to sort of look after them. I often leave them with our Norah and Jerry Simms."

So the six little Bunkers were left to themselves. And you can easily imagine that they had all sorts of good times. There was a stone walk around Aunt Jo's house, as well as around Mr. North's, and there Russ and his brothers and sisters rode in the express wagon, on the velocipede and on the coaster.

They laughed and shouted, and every now and then there would be an upset, but no one was hurt and they all seemed to like it.

Now and then Parker or William or Anne would come out from the house or the garage to look and see that the six little Bunkers were coming to no harm, and when they found the children were all right they smiled, for it was fun to watch them play.

"I know what we can do," said Russ to Laddie, after they had taken turns riding on the velocipede and coaster. Just at this time Margy and Mun Bun had the coaster and were playing steam-car with it.

"What can we do?" asked Laddie, always ready to have fun with his older brother.

"We can make a harness for Alexis, and hitch him to the express wagon," went on Russ.

"Oh, that'll be lots of fun!" cried Laddie. "But what'll we make a harness of? Aunt Jo hasn't any horses and Mr. North hasn't either."

"We can make it of string," said Russ. "It doesn't need to be very strong, for we aren't very heavy to pull."

So Russ and Laddie begged pieces of string from Parker, not telling what they were going to make.

"If it's a cat's cradle you have cord enough for a dozen," said the good-natured cook, as she handed out the pieces of string she had saved from the grocery packages.

"No, we're not going to make cats' cradles," answered Russ. "You can see it when we get finished."

It was no very hard matter to catch Alexis and fasten a lot of pieces of string around him, as nearly like a harness as the two little boys could manage. The dog loved children, and asked nothing better than to be with them. So he stood very still, just hanging his tongue out of his mouth, as the day was hot, while Laddie and Russ tied the cord around him. Then they fastened the ends to the express wagon, tying a number of knots.

"We've got to have lines to drive him with," said Laddie. "Else we can't guide him the way we want him to go."

"Yes, I'll make some lines," said Russ. He tied two strings around the neck of Alexis,

one for the left-hand side and the other for the right.

"I can't put a bit in his mouth, as I could if he was a horse," said Russ, "'cause Alexis holds his mouth open so much, to cool off his tongue, that the bit would fall out."

"That's right," said Laddie. "Anyhow, we don't want a bit. Now can we have a ride?"

"I guess so," said Russ.

There was quite a collection of strings tied around Alexis and made fast to the little express wagon.

"We'll get in now," said Russ, when he had the cord reins in his hands, "and we'll drive around the walk where Rose and Vi are playing with their dolls," for the two girls were having a party, with cookies and sugar water, which had been given to them by Parker.

Into the wagon got Russ and Laddie. Alexis, harnessed to the little wagon, turned his head to look at them, as if to make sure they were all right.

"Gid-dap!" called Russ, as he would to a horse.

"Bow-wow!" barked the dog, meaning, perhaps: "I will!"

Then he started to walk off.

Now, when I tell you that Alexis was a big, strong dog, and that Laddie and Russ in the express wagon made quite a heavy load, and when I say that the string harness was not very strong, you can easily imagine what happened. Alexis had not taken more than two steps before——

Snap! went the string harness, and it broke in several places.

"Whoa! Whoa!" called Russ. "Whoa there, Alexis!"

But Alexis never "whoaed" a bit. He kept on walking, and he walked right off with the bits of the string harness clinging to him, leaving the express wagon with the two little boys in it on the walk at the side of the house.

"Come on back and give us a ride!" called Laddie.

"I guess we'll have to make a stronger harness," said Russ with a laugh.

"I guess so, too," agreed Laddie.

Anyhow, Alexis didn't come back. Just

outside Aunt Jo's fence he saw another dog which he knew, and he ran up to have a "talk" with him, in bow-wow language, of course.

"Well, we didn't get a ride," said Laddie.

"No," agreed Russ, "we didn't. But I know what else we can do."

"What?" asked Laddie.

Russ did not answer for a moment. He was looking at a shovel lying in the back part of the yard, where William had been spading for a late flower bed. Then Russ saw the hose with which the man had been washing the automobile.

"We can make a fountain, Laddie!" exclaimed Russ.

"A fountain! How?"

"Come on, I'll show you!" said Russ.

Then he and his brother began to make a fountain. And I suppose you wonder how they did it.

CHAPTER IX

WHAT HAPPENED TO WILLIAM

"First," said Russ, as he took up the shovel, "we've got to make a hole."

"I thought you said we were going to make a fountain," said Laddie.

"We are," Russ went on. "But first you have to have some place for the fountain water to run into, don't you?"

"I guess so," agreed Laddie, who was not quite sure.

"'Course you have," insisted his older brother. "Don't you 'member how a fountain is? It has a big basin where the water splashes in out of a thing like a hose, and us boys could paddle our feet in the water if we wanted to."

"Oh! are you goin' to make *that* kind of a fountain?" asked Laddie.

"Sure," said Russ. "Come on, help me dig the hole, and then we'll fix the hose in

it and run it full of water and then we can paddle in it—I mean in the hole full of water —and the hose'll be squirtin', and that will be a fountain."

"That'll be fine!" cried Laddie. "I'll get a shovel and help you dig."

Laddie found a small shovel in the barn, and, Russ using the larger one, which was really too big for him, the two brothers began to make their fountain. If their father and mother had been at home, or even Aunt Jo had seen them, I don't suppose they would have been allowed to do this, for it wasn't exactly right, no matter how much fun they thought they would have.

But the boys went on digging, making a deep and large hole in the garden. They tossed the dirt out with their shovels, and, as the soil was soft, it was easy for them to dig in it.

"Isn't it 'most big enough now?" asked Laddie, after a while.

"Almost," Russ answered, as he looked up from where he stood in the hole.

"I'm tired—my back aches," Laddie went on.

"I'm tired, too," said Russ. "But I guess when you build a fountain it makes 'most everybody tired. We'll only dig a little more, and then we can run the water in and wade. I haven't had a good wade since we came from Grandma Bell's."

"Neither have I," said Laddie.

So they dug some more, until they really had quite a large hole in the garden, and then Russ went to get the hose. It was still attached to the faucet, but the water was not turned on.

If William had seen what the boys were doing he would have stopped them. For, though Mr. and Mrs. Bunker had said nothing about not letting the children play in the water, and though Aunt Jo had not spoken of it, either, still, I feel sure William would have stopped Laddie and Russ from making their fountain if he had seen them. But he did not. He was doing something inside the garage just then, and it was at this time that Russ took the nozzle end of the hose, and dragged the long, rubber pipe over toward the hole he and Laddie had dug.

"Now all we've got to do is to fasten the

hose in the hole, so it sticks up straight," said Russ. "Then I'll turn the water on, and we'll have a fountain and we can wade in it."

"That'll be fun!" exclaimed Laddie.

At first Russ did not have an easy time trying to make the hose nozzle stand up straight in the hole he and his brother had dug. Then the boy, after whistling a bit, and thinking as well as he could, exclaimed:

"I know how to do it!"

"How?" asked Laddie.

"Why, I'll just drive a stick down in the middle of the hole, and I'll leave part of it sticking up. Then I can tie the end of the hose to it, sticking up in the air, you know, and when I turn the water on it'll squirt right straight up and come down in the fountain."

"That'll be nice," said Laddie. But you just wait and see what happens.

Russ found an old broom-handle, and, using the shovel for a hammer, he drove this stick down into the soft dirt, leaving enough showing above the bottom of the hole to which to tie the hose.

Laddie helped his brother do this, and then

the fountain was ready to "play" as it is called. I suppose the water bubbling up and down, as it does in a fountain, really looks as though it were playing.

"Now we're all ready to turn it on," said Russ when the hose was tied fast.

"And then we can wade in the fountain," added Laddie. "I'm going to get my shoes and stockings off now," and he sat down on the ground, near the hole, and began to do this.

Russ went back to where, on the outside wall of the garage, the hose was screwed on the faucet. He tried to turn the brass handle. But it was stiff, and more than his little fingers could manage.

Come here, Laddie!" called Russ. "You've got to help me turn on the water."

"Wait till I get my other shoe off!" said Laddie.

"No, come on! Do it now!" said Russ. "You can take your shoe off afterwards, while we're waiting for the fountain basin to fill."

So, with one shoe on and the other off, Laddie limped over to the garage to help his

brother turn the faucet. Before this William had finished what he was doing, and had gone to the house to ask Parker something. He did not notice what Laddie and Russ were doing, but on his way back to the garage the chauffeur saw the pile of dirt, noticed the hole and looked at the end of the hose sticking up in the air.

"Now I wonder what that is," said William to himself. "I didn't leave the hose like that, and I don't believe Alexis could have dug such a big hole. I must certainly see what it is."

So William, forgetting for the moment about the little Bunkers, walked over to the hose. He saw it sticking up in the hole and, as he bent over it, he said:

"This must be the work of Laddie and Russ. I wonder what they're going to do. Play fireman, maybe."

And it was just then, as William leaned over the hose, that Russ and Laddie managed to turn the faucet. You can imagine what happened after that.

Through the hose spurted the water, out of the end, right in William's face. But of

course Laddie and Russ did not mean to do that.

"Oh, my! Here! What's this! Oh, I'm all wet!" spluttered the chauffeur. He jumped back, but not quite far enough, for he stumbled over some of the dirt, and fell down, and the water, shooting up into the air, came down on him in a regular shower.

"I say now! Stop it! Shut off the water!" cried William.

At first Laddie and Russ did not know what he meant. Then they looked toward the hole, which they intended for a fountain, and saw the chauffeur getting wet. William's legs seemed to be so tangled that he couldn't get up in a hurry, and he was getting very wet.

"Turn off the water! Turn off the water!" he begged. "I'm getting all mud!"

Laddie and Russ were frightened, then, and they tried to shut off the faucet. But, just as, often, when you want to do a thing in a hurry you can't, so it happened with the two boys. The faucet wouldn't turn, and the water kept on spurting, and William kept getting wet, until he finally managed to roll

out of the way and then he stood up, looking at the showering hose.

"What's all this?" asked the dripping chauffeur, but he was not angry. "What are you boys doing?"

"Please, it's a fountain we made," said Russ.

"And we're goin' wadin' in it!" added Laddie. "Oh, look, Russ! It squirts fine! I'm going to take off my other shoe!"

He sat down to do this. Really the fountain made from the hose, was sending out a fine shower of water that sparkled in the sun. The water was beginning to fill the hole the boys had dug.

"What are you going to do?" asked William, wiping the water from his face.

"We're goin' wadin' in the fountain," explained Laddie. "That's what we made it for."

"Oh, no, you'd better not," said William. "I'm sorry, but your aunt wouldn't like a fountain in her garden. It'll only be a mudhole, and you'll get all dirty. Your father and mother wouldn't want that. I guess I'd better shut off the water. When your aunt

comes home, if she lets you do it, why then it will be all right. But I'm afraid I can't let you do it now."

Russ and Laddie looked disappointed. After all their work not to have the fountain! It was too bad!

"We—we're sorry you got wet," said Russ, thinking perhaps William felt a little vexed at them.

"Oh, that's all right," said William. "I don't mind. These are my old clothes, anyhow. But I'd best shut off the water."

He started toward the faucet to do this. Already the hole Laddie and Russ had dug was half full, and would have made, as Russ said, a "dandy" place to wade. But it was not to be.

As the boys stood beside the hole half filled with water, and as William was at the faucet, ready to turn it off, a loud barking was heard, and into the garden came racing a little dog, chased by big Alexis, who was barking loudly.

"Oh, look!" cried Russ.

And then something else happened.

CHAPTER X

ROSE MAKES AN AIRSHIP

THE little dog that Alexis was racing after must have thought the puddle of water Russ and Laddie had made would be a good place in which to hide. For right into it he ran, and he splattered some of the muddy water over the two boys, who stood near the hole they had dug. William was over at the garage, turning off the faucet, so he did not get wet this time. And it was a good thing, too, as he was quite wet enough already.

The little dog kept on paddling in the puddle, but big Alexis did not stop when he came to the edge. With a loud bark, in he jumped, and as he was almost as big as a small Shetland pony you can easily imagine what a big splash he made.

"Oh! Oh!" cried Russ, as he felt the muddy water shower all over him.

In the puddle floundered Alexis after the

smaller dog, and as the water was not deep enough for Aunt Jo's Great Dane to swim in, he just ran through it, really making more of a splash than if he had swum. And he splashed a lot of muddy water over Russ and Laddie.

"Oh, look at me!" cried Laddie, as he glanced down at his suit, which was speckled and checkered with wet and brown spots.

"I'm the same way," said Russ. "But I don't care! We couldn't help it, and these are our old clothes, anyhow."

Just then the little dog scrambled out on the far side of the hole, and Alexis, with a bark, sprang after him.

"Oh, stop him, William!" cried Laddie. "Stop him! Alexis will bite the little dog all to pieces."

"No, he won't do that," replied the chauffeur. "The two dogs are good friends. The little one lives down the street a way, and he and Alexis often play together this way, and race all over the yard. But I never saw 'em go into a mud-puddle before. Say, but you two youngsters are sights! Look at the mud!"

He had shut off the water by this time, and come back to the hole. Meanwhile Alexis was rolling on the grass, letting the little dog pretend to bite his ears.

"The mud'll brush off," said Russ.

"These are our old clothes," added his brother.

"Well, that's a good thing," said the chauffeur. "We're all in the same boat, I guess. But don't dig any more holes in the yard, and don't play with the hose unless your aunt says you may. She may blame me as it is."

When Mrs. Bunker and Aunt Jo came home, the mud had pretty well dried on the clothes of Russ and Laddie, and they did not look so dirty. But of course they told what had happened.

"You must never do it again!" said their mother. "Don't make any more fountains in Aunt Jo's yard."

"We won't," promised Laddie.

"Could we make one over in Mr. North's yard?" asked Russ. "Maybe he'd like one."

"No, not over there, either," his mother said, trying not to laugh.

So that was how Russ made a fountain,

and what happened afterward, and for many a day he and Laddie had fun telling the other little Bunkers what they had done.

As the summer days went by the children had lots of fun at Aunt Jo's. They went downtown to see the sights of Boston, including Bunker Hill monument, saw some nice moving-picture shows and went on excursions.

Meanwhile, Daddy Bunker and others had looked in the paper to see if any one had advertised for a lost pocketbook with sixty-five dollars in it. But no one had.

And to make sure of finding the owner Mr. Bunker put an advertisement in himself, stating that such a purse had been found, and offering to give it to the real owner.

But no one came to claim it. The shabby wallet, with the roll of bills and the sad little letter, was locked in Aunt Jo's safe, waiting for the owner to come. But no one came.

"And can I keep the money?" asked Rose, who inquired, each day, whether any one had yet come for it.

"We'll see," promised her mother.

"I'd like to have the money to spend," went on Rose.

"Oh, my dear! What would you spend so much money for?" asked Aunt Jo.

"I'd buy a lot of circus balloons," answered Rose. "I know a store, about two blocks down the street, that sells 'em. And I want some."

"Oh, well, if you only want money for a toy balloon I'll give you that," said her mother.

"May I have one, too?" asked Vi.

"And me?" added Margy.

"And me?" said Mun Bun. "What is it?"

He always wanted what the others had, whether or not he knew what it was.

"Let's all get one!" exclaimed Russ, who seemed to have an idea. "Let's all get a balloon, and then we can tie strings to 'em and see which one goes the highest."

"We can have a race!" suggested Laddie.

"That's right!" agreed Russ. "We'll have a race."

Thinking this would be harmless fun for the children, Mrs. Bunker gave them money enough so each one could buy a good ten-cent toy balloon, for Rose wanted that kind.

"The tenners are bigger than the fivers,"

she said, "and they go higher and last longer."

With shouts of glee and laughter the six little Bunkers went down the street to get the toy balloons. It was not far, and their mother knew they would not get lost.

"I'm afraid the children aren't having as much fun here at my house in Boston as they had at Grandma Bell's," said Aunt Jo, as the youngsters went down the street after the balloons.

"Oh, they are indeed!" said Mother Bunker. "They always have a good time, wherever they go. Don't worry about them."

"If the weather keeps nice we'll go down to Nantasket Beach some day," said Aunt Jo. "I think they'll like it there. It is a seaside resort."

"They'll be sure to," said Mrs. Bunker. "I do wish we could find the person who owned that sixty-five dollars. I have an idea it must be the savings of some poor woman, or rather, from the letter, money some one sent her. It must be hard for her to lose it, but we can't seem to find to whom it belongs."

"Perhaps we shall, some day," said Aunt

Jo. And they were to, in a very strange way, as you shall hear in due time.

Down the street ran the six little Bunkers, to get the toy balloons. They saw them in the store window—red, green and blue ones, and they picked out different colors.

"Don't they look pretty?" cried Vi, as they marched back with the blown-up rubber bags floating in the air over their heads.

As yet the balloons had only short strings on them, and Rose, to make sure the toys of Mun Bun and Margy would not get away, tied the strings to their wrists.

"They look like big plums or apples," said Laddie. "Maybe I could think up a riddle about the balloons."

"Well, you can be thinking about it when we have a race to see which one goes highest in the air," said Russ. "When we get to Aunt Jo's house, we'll get string and let the balloons sail away up."

Mother Bunker said strong thread would be better than string, as it would not be so heavy, and soon the six little Bunkers were out in the front yard, letting their toys sail high above their heads.

"Mine's the highest!" cried Russ, as he looked at his green balloon floating high above the trees.

"That's 'cause you let out all the thread," said Laddie. "I'm not going to let all mine unwind."

And neither did the other children, for they were afraid their toys might get away. For some time they had fun in this way, pulling the balloons down when they got very far up in the air, and then letting them float upward again.

Then came a call from the house. It was Mother Bunker, saying:

"Here is some bread and jam for hungry children. How many of you want it?"

There was no question as to how many did. Each of the six little Bunkers was hungry.

"Let's tie our balloons to the fence and leave 'em here until we get back," said Russ, and this was done, he and Rose tying the threads of Mun Bun and Margy, who could not make very good knots as yet.

And so, with the balloons floating out in front, the children went back to sit under the

grape-arbor and eat bread and jam that Parker spread for them.

It was so good that some of them had two slices, and then William brought the automobile out of the garage and began to get it ready for a run. Aunt Jo was to take the children for a ride.

"What's William doing to the auto?" asked Vi.

"Come on! Let's watch him!" proposed Russ, and he and Laddie, with Vi, Mun Bun and Margy, ran over to where the chauffeur was doing something to the car.

"Will our balloons be all right?" asked Laddie.

"Yes, they can't get away," said Russ.

Well, that was true enough. The balloons could not have gotten away by themselves, but something happened to them.

Rose did not go with her brothers and sisters over to watch William. Instead, she went into the house, got Lily, one of her dolls, and a small basket. Rose had a queer idea in her little head, and she was going to carry it out.

A day or so before an airship had flown

over Boston, circling around the Back Bay section, and right over Aunt Jo's house. The children were much excited by it, and at first Russ was going to make one. But he found it harder than he supposed, so he gave it up.

"But I can make an airship," said Rose to herself. "Anyhow I can make something to give my doll a ride in the air in a basket."

And that is what the little girl was going to do. She had felt how hard one balloon pulled—for they were filled with gas just as a real balloon is—and Rose thought that if one balloon pulled so strongly six would pull harder yet.

"I'll tie all six balloons to the basket, and put Lily in and give her an airship ride," said Rose.

So, while her brothers and sisters were watching the chauffeur, this is what Rose did. She carefully loosed each balloon, besides her own, from the fence, and tied the strings to the handle of the basket in which she put Lily.

Lily was not heavy like Sue, the doll about which I told you before, the one the lady once thought was her baby in the car. The basket

was not heavy, either. So that when Rose had tied the last balloon to the handle, she found that it rose into the air with her doll, and would have floated off, only Rose tied a cord to the bottom of the basket, and kept hold of that.

"Now I've got an airship for my doll!" exclaimed the little girl, and, really, she did have one kind of airship.

Up above her head floated the basket with Lily in it, and Rose was quite pleased.

"I can make things as good as Russ, even if I can't whistle like him," she said. "This is fun! Don't you like it, Lily?"

Of course Lily couldn't answer and say that she did, but if dolls like airship rides I'm sure this one of Rose's did.

Up and along floated the balloons, lifting the basket, and then, all of a sudden, something happened.

ABOVE HER HEAD FLOATED THE BASKET WITH LILY IN IT.
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Six Little Bunkers at Aunt Jo's.

CHAPTER XI

VI IS LOST

Rose said, afterward, that it was not the fault of Alexis, though the barking of the big dog made her jump and lose her hold on the string that was fast to the basket in which the doll Lily rode as if in an airship. But that is what happened.

As Rose was walking along, letting the balloons float over her head, and giving a ride to Lily, the big dog came bounding out of the side yard. He wanted to play with Rose, and he raced toward her, jumping up and down. Rose was afraid he would jump up and put his paws on her, and Alexis was so big that when he did this to any of the six little Bunkers he almost always knocked them down. In fact, he had knocked Mun Bun and Margy down more than once, but only in fun, and he had not hurt them.

"Go away, Alexis! Now go away!" ex-

claimed Rose, as she held the string above her head. "I can't play with you now, because I got to give Lily an airship ride. Go away, Alexis!"

But Alexis didn't want to go away! He barked and he danced around, and he kept coming closer and closer to Rose, until he really almost bumped into her. And then it happened.

Rose let go of the string, by which she was holding the basket that had Lily in it, and up it shot, high in the air, pulled by the gas-filled toy balloons. There were six of them, extra big ten-cent ones, and they could easily lift the small doll in the basket.

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" cried Rose, three times. "Look what you made me do, Alexis! Oh! Oh!"

And yet, afterward, Rose said it wasn't the dog's fault.

"I oughtn't to have taken anybody's balloon but mine, and then they wouldn't be lost," said the little girl sadly.

For that is what happened.

Up and up into the air, high above Rose's head, shot the six balloons—red, green and

blue—carrying the doll. When she first felt the string pulling out of her hand Rose did not know what to do. Then, as she saw the balloons sailing away, she jumped up into the air and tried to grab them. But it was too late. Away over the trees sailed the airship Rose had made, carrying her doll on an unknown voyage.

"Oh, dear!" cried the little girl again, as she saw that, no matter how high she jumped, she could not get hold of the string again. "Oh, dear!"

She looked at the six floating balloons, hoping they might get caught in a tree, as once one did that Mun Bun had.

But no such good luck as this happened. The balloons sailed clear of the trees and went on and on and up and up, becoming smaller and smaller.

"Oh, my poor, dear Lily!" sobbed Rose, and she was really crying now. "My dear, darling Lily!"

"Why, what is the matter, my dear?" asked Aunt Jo, who came along just then. "Has anything happened? Did Alexis hurt you?" for she saw the big dog standing near Rose,

and thought perhaps, in his play, he might have scratched the little girl.

"No, it wasn't the fault of Alexis," said Rose, "though he did bump into me and make me let go of the string. But I ought never to have taken the balloons."

"The balloons?" asked Aunt Jo, not exactly understanding at first.

"Yes," said Rose. "They're gone. I made an airship of 'em for my doll, and—there she goes!"

She pointed up into the air. Aunt Jo saw the toy balloons, tied to the handle of the basket, and they were getting smaller and smaller.

"Oh, my dear little girl!" said she. "And you have taken all the balloons! That's too bad!"

And Rose cried harder than ever. Really she had not done just right, but of course she had not meant to spoil the fun of her brothers and sisters, and lose their toys. But she had.

Pretty soon Russ, Laddie and the others came from having watched William get the automobile ready.

"Where are our balloons?" demanded Laddie, not seeing them tied to the fence.

"They're gone," said Aunt Jo softly, as she put her arms around Rose.

"Gone?" cried Russ. "Where? Did they bust?"

"I made an airship of 'em," confessed Rose, "and let go the cord when Alexis bumped me, and—and there they go!" and she pointed to the sky.

Well, you can easily imagine that the five little Bunkers felt quite bad at losing their balloons. Margy and Mun Bun cried, being the smallest. Vi looked as if she wanted to, and so did Laddie. But Laddie felt he was too big, and Vi didn't want to do anything her twin brother didn't do; especially crying.

Russ swallowed what seemed to be a lump in his throat, and then, learning that his sister's doll had been carried off in the "airship" and seeing how bad Rose felt, and noticing the tears on her cheeks, he said:

"Oh, well, maybe the balloons would have busted anyhow. I don't care 'cause you lost mine, Rose."

"I don't either," said Laddie bravely.

Then Vi said the same thing. Wasn't that good of them? I think so.

Of course Margy and Mun Bun, being little, felt worse over the loss of their balloons than the others did. But Aunt Jo found some pieces of candy for the little tots, and promised they could have new balloons in a few days.

"And now we'll all go for an auto ride," she said.

That made Margy and Mun Bun smile, and the other little Bunkers also felt better.

"Will you take us out the way the balloons are blowing?" asked Russ, for the "airship" could still be seen, a faint speck in the sky.

"Why do you want to go that way?" asked Aunt Jo.

"Because maybe then we can get the balloons back," Russ said.

"And my doll, too, and the basket!" added Rose eagerly.

"Maybe," said Russ. "You know balloons and airships have always got to come down. They can't sail on forever, and when this one you made, Rose, comes down, we can get it, and your doll, too."

"Oh, won't that be good!" cried the little girl. "I do hope we can!"

"Well, of course you may find it," said Aunt Jo; "but I'm afraid you never will, Rose. Of course I know, around the Fourth of July, sometimes fire balloons, that burn out and don't burn up, come down. Once one came down in our yard, and William got it. And this may happen to the balloons you sent up, or that you let get away from you. The gas may all go out of them, as it probably will, and the basket and the doll will come down."

"I'd like to get Lily again, awful much," said Rose. "'Course she wasn't my best doll, but I love her just the same."

"Well, we'll take an automobile ride," said her aunt, "and if we see the airship down anywhere we'll get it."

"Maybe some other little girl will find it, as you did the pocketbook, and want to keep it," suggested Russ.

"Well, if she knew it was my doll wouldn't she give it back to me?" asked Rose.

"I'm sure she would," put in Aunt Jo. "But don't set your heart too much on it, my

dear. I'm afraid your doll is gone forever."

But you just wait and see what happens.

They all went for an automobile ride, and, though they looked in the direction the balloons had floated, they did not see the "airship." Rose and Russ even asked several policemen they passed if they had seen the balloons and basket with the doll in it come down, but none had.

Of course Rose felt bad, and so did the other little Bunkers, about losing their balloons, but there was no help for it. They were gone.

It was a day or so after this, and the children were talking about a trip to Nantasket Beach Aunt Jo was to take them on, when just as lunch was about to be served, Parker came in to say:

"We are all out of bread, Miss Bunker. The baker forgot to stop. Shall I send William for some?"

"Oh, let me go!" begged Vi. "I know where there is a bakery, right down the street. It isn't far."

"Are you sure you know the way?" asked Aunt Jo.

"'Course I do," Vi answered.

"Well, you may go," said Aunt Jo. "Only be careful not to get lost. Don't turn around the wrong corners."

"I won't," promised Vi.

But that is just what she did. She got the bread all right, but, on the way back she stopped to pet a kitten that rubbed up against her. And then Vi got turned around, and she went down a side street, and walked two or three blocks before she knew that she was wrong.

"Aunt Jo doesn't live on this street," said the little girl to herself, as she stopped and looked around. "I don't see her house and I don't see Mr. North's. I must have come the wrong way."

So she had, and she turned to go back. But she went wrong again, making a turn around another corner and then Vi didn't know what to do. She stood in front of a house, with the bread under her arm, and tears came into her eyes.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Vi. "It's terrible to be lost so near home!"

CHAPTER XII

MARGY TAKES A RIDE

This was not the first time Violet had been lost. More than once, even in her home town of Pineville, she had wandered away over the fields or out toward the woods, and had not been able to find her way back again. But always, at such times, Norah or Jerry Simms, or Daddy or Mother Bunker had come to find her and take her home.

"But I don't see any of them now," said Vi, as she gazed around her. There were quite a number of persons on the street, for it was the noon hour, but the little girl knew none of them, and none of them seemed to pay any attention to her.

I think, though, almost any one of those who passed by poor little Vi, standing there in the street, if they had known she was lost, would have gone up to her and tried to help her.

But there were many children in the street, and several of them were standing still, looking not very different from Vi, except that she was crying—not a great deal, but enough to make her eyes wet.

"I guess I'd better walk along a little," said Vi to herself, after a bit. "Maybe I'll see Aunt Jo's house, or Russ or Rose or—or somebody that knows me."

Poor little Vi, just then, would have been glad to see even Alexis, the big dog. Alexis would lead her home, Vi felt sure. But the big dog was not in sight.

Vi walked a little way down the street, and then a little way up it. She looked at all the houses and at every one she met, still holding fast to the loaf of bread. But she did not see Aunt Jo's house, and she did not know any of the men or women or boys or girls that passed her.

"Oh, I'm worse lost than ever!" sighed the little girl. "I wonder what I can do. I'm going to ask some one!"

Now the best way for Vi to have done was to have gone up to one of the houses and asked where her Aunt Jo's home was. But

the funny thing about it was that Vi wasn't quite sure what her aunt's name was. Her own name, she knew, was Violet Bunker, but she never spoke of Aunt Jo except just by that name, never using the last part and, while it was the same name as her own, Vi didn't know it. She felt she couldn't very well go up to a house and say:

"Where does my Aunt Jo live?"

The person in the house would be sure to ask:

"What is your aunt's last name, my dear, and on what street does she live?"

But Vi didn't know that. So you see she was quite badly lost, though she had only been away from her aunt's home a little while.

And then, as the little girl stood there, the tears coming into her eyes faster than ever, along came a rather tall girl with a pleasant face, who, as soon as she saw Vi, went up to her and asked kindly:

"What is the matter? Did you lose your money?"

"Oh, no," Vi answered, "I didn't lose my money, but I've lost myself. I spent the

money for bread for Aunt Jo, but I came on the wrong street, I guess, and I don't know where she lives."

"Where who lives?"

"Aunt Jo. I'm one of the six little Bunkers and we're staying at Aunt Jo's, but I don't know where she lives."

Then this tall, pleasant-faced girl asked, just as any one else would have done:

"What's Aunt Jo's other name?"

And Vi didn't know!

Then the girl tried to get Vi to tell in what sort of house Aunt Jo lived, and near what other houses or big buildings it was. But Vi was only six years old, and she hadn't noticed much about houses. She had been too busy playing.

"But Aunt Jo has a big dog," said Vi. "He's an awful big dog, and he almost knocks you down when he plays with you. If I could find him he'd take me home."

"What's the dog's name?" asked the girl.

"Alexis," answered Vi, "and he——"

"Oh, now I know where your aunt lives!" cried the tall girl. "I often see that big dog, and I have heard the chauffeur call him

Alexis. I remember it because it's a sort of Russian name, and I like to read about Russia. Now I can take you home."

"Can you—really?" asked Vi eagerly.

"Surely. I know the very house where Alexis lives, and if you live there with your Aunt Jo I can take you home. It isn't far; come on. My name is Mary Turner, and my mother used to sew for a lady on the same street where your aunt lives. I know the way; come on."

Taking hold of Vi's hand, the kind girl led her along the street, around a corner and down another block and then Vi cried:

"Oh, now I'm all right. I know where I am now. That's Mr. North's house and I see Aunt Jo's house and here comes Daddy to meet me!" And surely enough, along came Mr. Bunker, looking up and down the street for a sight of his little girl, who had been gone so long for the loaf of bread that he knew she must be lost.

"Well, if you're sure you can find your way I'll let you run along by yourself," said Mary Turner.

"Oh, yes, I'm all right now," said Vi. "My

father sees me, and he's waving to me. Thank you for taking care of me."

"I'm glad I could help you a little," said Mary.

"Does your mother sew any more?" asked Vi.

"No," answered Mary, and her voice sounded sad. "She had a great shock, and she's ill in the hospital now. I have to go to work to take care of her. Well, good-bye, and don't get lost again," and Mary turned down a side street and walked on, waving her hand to Violet.

"Well, little girl, what happened to you?" asked Daddy Bunker, as he walked up to his daughter. "We were getting worried about you, so I came out to see what had happened."

"I got lost," Vi answered. "I went down the wrong street, but Mary Turner—she knew where Alexis lived, and she brought me to you."

"Who is Mary Turner?" asked Mr. Bunker.

"That's the nice girl that just went away," said Vi, pointing, for her new friend was

still in sight. "Her mother used to sew for somebody on Aunt Jo's street, but she's in the hospital now—I mean her mother is; she's sick."

"That's too bad," said Mr. Bunker. "Aunt Jo might do something for her. But perhaps the girl doesn't like to ask. Anyhow, I'm glad you're not lost any longer. Come along to lunch now."

So that's how Vi was lost and found. And she was soon eating lunch with the other little Bunkers and telling them what had happened.

"What can we do this afternoon to have fun?" asked Russ, as he got up from the table.

"Let's see if we can't make a better harness for Alexis, and have him pull us in the express wagon," suggested Laddie. "I found some strong rope that we can tie on him."

"All right, we'll do that," agreed Russ. "That'll be fun."

"Will you give me a ride?" asked Mun Bun. "I'll help you make the harness if you will."

"Yes, we'll give you a ride," said Russ,

"but I guess we can make the harness ourselves. Come on, Laddie."

"I'm going to play with my doll," said Margy. "My rubber doll is all dirty and I'm going to wash her."

"Well, don't turn the hose on her, as Russ and Laddie did to William," laughed Aunt Jo. "Just wash your doll in a basin of water, Margy dear."

"Yes, I'll do that, Aunt Jo," answered the little girl.

"I'm going to make a new dress for my big best doll Sue," announced Rose. "I haven't got my little Lily to love now, so I'll make Sue look nice. You didn't find my doll that went up in the airship, did you, Daddy?" she asked.

"No," answered Mr. Bunker. "And I don't believe I ever shall."

"And we haven't heard who lost that pocketbook with the sixty-five dollars in it," said Mrs. Bunker. "It is very strange no one claims the money."

"Yes," said Aunt Jo, "it is. But some day we may find out who owns it. Though if we don't by the time you folks are ready to

go home, it will belong to Rose, for she found it."

"And then I can buy a new doll," said the little girl.

So, while Russ, Laddie and Mun Bun went to the garage to try to make another harness for Alexis, Rose and Margy played with their dolls. Violet said she was tired from having walked around so much when she was lost, though I think it was because she had cried, so her mother put her to bed for a short nap. Then Daddy Bunker went downtown and Aunt Jo and Mrs. Bunker sat on the porch sewing.

It was about half an hour after Margy and Rose had begun to play with their dolls, Margy washing her rubber one in a basin of water, that something happened. Margy got up from the side porch where she was sitting with Rose, and said:

"I'm going to dry her now."

"Dry who?" asked Rose.

"My rubber doll," answered Margy. "She's all wet and I'm going to take her down in the laundry where Parker is, and put my doll by the fire to dry."

"All right," answered Rose, "don't burn yourself."

"I won't," said Margy, as she went toward the laundry, which was in the basement of Aunt Jo's big house.

A little while after this Parker, on going into the kitchen over the laundry, heard a voice crying:

"Oh, I can't get out! I can't get out! I'm stuck in and I can't get out."

"For land sakes! Who are you, and what has happened?" cried the frightened cook. "It's one of the six little Bunkers, I know," she went on, "but what happened?"

"Oh, I went to take a ride," said Margy, "and now I can't get out! Oh, dear!"

And her voice seemed to come from afar.

CHAPTER XIII

MUN BUN DRIVES AWAY

PARKER was a good cook, but she did not know much about children. She liked them though, and was kind to them. So when she heard Margy's voice calling, she could not imagine what had happened, nor did she know what to do.

If it had been Mrs. Bunker, or even Daddy Bunker, they would have at once found out what the matter was. But then they were used to things happening to children.

"Oh, where are you?" cried Parker, as Margy kept on screaming.

"I don't know what you call it, but I'm in it," said the little girl, in that queer, faraway voice.

"But where is it?" asked Parker, for, somehow, the voice seemed to come from somewhere between the laundry and the kitchen.

"It's that thing you pull up and down with soap and starch and clothes on," said Margy. "I got in it to have a ride, but my leg is stuck and I can't get out and, oh, dear! I want my mother!"

"Yes, and I guess I want her, too!" exclaimed Parker. "Oh, my! This is worse than having the chimney on fire. I'll go and call your mother, child," she went on, "for I can't see a blessed hair of your head. Though you must be somewhere around, and maybe hiding to fool me."

"Oh, no, I'm not hiding," answered Margy, who, it seems, could hear Parker very well. "I'm in the pull-up-and-let-down-thing, and I want to get out!"

But Parker did not stay to listen. She ran out to the side porch, where Aunt Jo and Mrs. Bunker were sewing, and cried:

"Oh, come quick! The poor child's caught and can't get out and I can't see her!"

"Where is she? What happened?" asked Aunt Jo and Mrs. Bunker.

"She's somewhere between the laundry and the kitchen," said the maid. "I can't see her, though I can hear her and——"

Mrs. Bunker and her sister-in-law did not stop to listen to any more. To the kitchen they hurried, and there they, too, heard the voice of Margy crying:

"Take me out! Take me out! I'm in the puller-up-and-down-thing!"

Aunt Jo knew right away what Margy meant.

"She must be stuck in the dumbwaiter—that we pull up and down between the kitchen and the laundry," she said. "Are you there, Margy?" she asked as she opened a door in the side wall of the kitchen.

And then, up the shaft, came the voice of the little girl:

"Yes, I'm in here and I can't go down and I can't get up. Oh, dear!"

"Now don't cry! Mother is here," said Mrs. Bunker. "And so is Aunt Jo. We'll get you up in a minute. Don't be afraid."

Aunt Jo ran downstairs and looked up the dumbwaiter shaft. She could see the box-like waiter stuck halfway up, but of course she could not see Margy. A dumbwaiter is like a little elevator, except that, as a rule, no one rides in it. It is used to pull things

up and down between two rooms, when a person does not want to use the stairs.

"I see what's the matter," said Aunt Jo, as she looked up the shaft once more. "Margy's foot stuck out over the edge of the box, in which she climbed to have a ride, and the waiter can't slide up and down. Her foot wedges it fast."

"Can we get it loose?" asked Mother Bunker.

"Oh, yes, easily, I think. Get me my long-handled parasol, Parker. I'll reach that up the shaft and push Margy's foot loose. Then the dumbwaiter, with her in it, will slide down."

And that is just what happened. With the end of the parasol, not pushing so hard as to hurt, Aunt Jo shoved loose Margy's foot. Then the dumbwaiter, which was a sort of open box, slid down on the rope that ran over a pulley-wheel, and Margy was lifted out. She had been crying and was frightened, but she felt all right when her mother took her in her arms and kissed her.

"How did you come to do it?" asked Mrs. Bunker.

"I came down to the laundry to dry my rubber doll after I'd washed her," said Margy, "and I put her by the fire. One day I saw Parker give a lot of bars of soap a ride on the go-up-and-down-thing."

"Yes, I do use the dumbwaiter for that," said the cook.

"Then I thought I could get a ride if the soap got a ride," went on Margy. "So, when Parker was out by the garage I went up in the kitchen, and I stood on a chair, I did, and I crawled into the go-up-and-down-thing, and it went down with me. But it didn't go all the way down. It stuck and I couldn't have a nice ride."

"I should say not!" cried Mrs. Bunker. "And you mustn't do such a thing again. You might have been hurt when you got your foot caught."

"It does hurt a little," said Margy, rubbing it.

So that's how it happened. Margy had crawled from the chair in the kitchen into the box of the dumbwaiter. It had run down with her until her foot, sticking over the edge, wedged the waiter fast, halfway

down the shaft. Then the door in the wall blew shut, and when Margy cried Parker was so "flustered," as she said afterward, that she never stopped to think where the voice came from.

"But don't do it again," warned Aunt Jo.

"I won't," promised Margy.

From out in the yard of Aunt Jo's house came joyous shouts and laughter. Russ could be heard calling:

"Oh, it works! It works all right! Now we can all have rides."

"Well, whatever it is, I hope it isn't a dumbwaiter they're riding in," said Mother Bunker.

She and Aunt Jo looked from the window. They saw that Russ and Laddie had finally managed to make a harness for the dog Alexis, out of stronger pieces of cord than they used at first. The dog was tied with the cords to the express wagon, and seated in it were Laddie and Mun Bun. Russ was walking alongside, guiding Alexis by strings tied around his neck.

"Make him go fast!" cried Mun Bun. "I want to ride fast!"

"Oh, if he runs too fast I can't keep up with him," said Russ. "Alexis can run a lot faster than I can, and if he goes too fast I'll lose hold of him."

"Let me drive a little," begged Laddie. So Russ let his smaller brother take the strings that answered for reins. But Russ stayed near the head of the big dog, with his hand on his collar. For Russ was a careful boy, and did not want the dog to run away and, perhaps, spill the little boys out of the wagon.

"Oh, I want a ride in that!" cried Margy, when she saw what her brothers were doing. "That's nicer than the up-and-down-thing I was in."

"Yes, and a little safer," said her mother. "You may go out and Russ will give you a ride. Russ, Margy is coming out," she called. "Take care of her!"

"I will," promised the largest Bunker boy.

Then such fun as the six children had riding behind Alexis, for Violet awakened from her sleep and came out to enjoy the sport. Russ and Laddie had tied so many ropes on Alexis, fastening them to the cart, that Wil-

liam said it would take an hour to loosen the knots. But Alexis did not seem to mind. He walked along, pulling the cart, with two or three children in it, as easily as though he were dragging along a tin can tied to his tail, and much more sedately.

Only nobody had ever tied a tin can to the tail of Alexis. He wasn't the kind of dog one could do that to. You might have dared try when he was a little puppy, but not after he grew up to be almost as big as a small Shetland pony.

"Oh, this is lots of fun!" cried Rose, when it was her turn to have a ride. "I wish my doll Lily was here to like it."

"She had a good ride in the airship," remarked Russ.

"Oh! Oh!" suddenly cried Laddie.

"What's the matter?" asked Russ. "Did a bee sting you?"

"No. I just thought of a nice riddle. It's about the balloon airship Rose made and the dumbwaiter Margy had a ride in."

"What's the riddle?" asked Vi.

"It's like this," went on Laddie, thinking hard to get it just right. "What's the dif-

ference between Rose's airship and the dumb-waiter Margy rode in? What's the difference?"

"A whole lot!" said Rose. "They're not alike at all."

"Well, that's the riddle—what makes 'em different!" asked Laddie.

"Because they both have a basket," said Russ. "Rose tied the balloons to a basket, and the clothes basket rides on the dumb-waiter."

"Nope! That isn't it," said Laddie, shaking his head. "You see Rose's airship went up, and wouldn't come down, and the dumb-waiter, with Margy in it, went down and wouldn't come up."

"Huh! That's pretty good," said Russ. "But I guess those balloons are down by this time."

"And my doll, too," added Rose. "I wish I could find her."

"Well, part of the riddle is right, anyhow," said Laddie.

"Yes, it's pretty good," agreed Russ. "And now we'll have some more rides."

Around Aunt Jo's house, up and down the

lawn and on the paths Alexis pulled the six little Bunkers in the express wagon, with the string harness, and they had lots of fun. Even the big dog seemed to enjoy it, and he didn't get tired.

It was two days after this, during which time the children had lots of fun, that something else happened. Mun Bun was the unlucky one; or lucky, whichever way you look at it.

Sometimes, even in the fashionable Back Bay section of Boston, rag peddlers came to buy odds and ends from the homes of the people. The chauffeurs or the furnace men usually attended to the selling of this, being allowed to keep whatever money they got for themselves.

One of the wagons, with bags and all sorts of things in it, stopped, one day, in front of Aunt Jo's house. The ragman knew William, who often sold him old newspapers or junk, and this time he had quite a few things to sell.

"Rags! Rags! Bottles and rags!" cried the junkman as he went back to the garage with a bag over his shoulder.

As it happened, Mun Bun was out, watching William pump air into a new tire, and when the chauffeur went into the cellar with the junkman to get the papers, Mun Bun wandered out in front to where the junkman's horse and wagon was standing.

"If I could get up into that wagon now," thought Mun Bun to himself, "I could have a better ride than with Alexis. I guess I will."

How he managed to climb up I don't know, but he did. The wagon was not very high, and there was a step near the front, and of course there were wheels. Somehow, Mun Bun scrambled up, and the horse, luckily for him, did not move while the boy was climbing. Right up on the seat got Mun Bun. He picked up the real reins, as he had seen Russ do with the make-believe ones on Alexis, and then Mun Bun called:

"Gid-dap!"

And, just as easily as you please, the horse started off as natural as anything, with Mun Bun driving. Down the street he slowly walked, much to the delight of Mun Bun.

But what would happen next?

CHAPTER XIV

THE WHISTLING WAGON

MUN BUN smiled happily. This was more fun than he had ever expected to have at Aunt Jo's house. In fact, what little thinking he did about it was to the effect that he could have had a lot more fun by staying at Grandma Bell's.

Up he sat on the seat of the junkman's wagon, holding the reins as he had helped Russ or Laddie hold the reins on the big dog Alexis, who pulled the six little Bunkers in the express wagon.

"This is fun!" said Mun Bun.

The horse slowly walked along. Junkmen's horses hardly ever run. There are several reasons for this.

In the first place, a junkman's horse goes slowly because the junkman is never in a hurry. He wants to look at the houses on each side of the street to see if any one is

going to call him in to sell him paper, rags, old bottles, rubber boots or broken stoves.

So, of course, a junkman wants his horse to go slowly, for then he has a chance to look at the houses on each side of the street. For nowadays the junkmen, in the cities, at least, are not allowed to ring bells and shout loudly or make much noise. They used to do that, but they can't any more.

Another reason why a junkman's horse walks slowly is that the poor horse is nearly always old and thin and hungry.

And I suppose it's a good thing this junkman's horse was old and thin and tired and hungry. That's what made him go slowly, so Mun Bun was not rattled off the seat. He was only a little fellow, and it would not have taken much of a jolt of the wagon to have tossed him off. But as long as the wagon went slowly he was all right.

"Gid-dap!" cried Mun Bun in a jolly voice, and he pulled on the reins, thinking what fun it was really to drive, and not make-believe, as he and the others had done with Alexis.

All this while the junkman was in Aunt Jo's yard, talking with William about the old

rags and papers the chauffeur had to sell. The five other little Bunkers were playing at different games, Daddy Bunker was downtown, and Aunt Jo and Mother Bunker were busy at something or other, I've forgotten just what.

So there was no one in particular to see what Mun Bun was doing, and he was just having the grandest time, all by himself, driving the poor, thin horse. Of course he wasn't really driving it. The horse just went along as it always did, as slowly as it could, and, very likely, it didn't know, or care, whether Mun Bun was driving it, or the junkman.

"Gid-dap!" cried the little fellow again, and he pulled on the reins. And then a funny thing happened. He pulled a little harder on the left rein than on the right, and, just as the animal had been used to doing whenever this happened, the horse turned to the left, and went down a side street.

Mun Bun didn't mind this. He didn't care which way the horse went as long as he was having a ride and was doing the driving. Down the side street went the junk wagon,

with Mun Bun on it. He was now out of sight of any one who might be looking from Aunt Jo's yard.

The little fellow was halfway down the new block when a woman, looking from the window of her house, saw the bony horse and the old rattly, rickety wagon.

"Oh, there's a junkman!" she cried. "I've been looking for one a long time to take the papers out of the cellar. There's a junkman!"

"No, it's a junk boy," said the woman's cook, who happened to be with her. "There's no one but a little boy on the wagon."

"Well, maybe it's the junkman's little boy," said the woman. "They let them drive when they go in after the junk. Run after him, Jane, and stop him. I want to get the trash cleaned out of the cellar."

So the cook ran quickly to the front door and cried:

"Hey! Junk boy! Stop! We got some papers for you!"

Mun Bun heard, and turned around.

"I isn't the junkman," he said. "I'm just havin' a ride!"

"We have some old papers for you," called the cook.

Mun Bun didn't know just what it all meant, but he saw the cook waving her hand at him, and he heard her calling, though he could not make out all the words, because the wagon rattled so. But Mun Bun had an idea.

"I guess maybe she wants a ride," he said. "She likes to ride same as I do. I'll give her a ride with me."

He pulled on the reins, and called:

"Whoa!"

But either Mun Bun did not pull hard enough, or he did not call loudly enough, for the horse did not stop. Perhaps it thought that if it did stop it would be too hard work to start again, so it kept on going.

"Stop! Stop!" cried the cook. "We have some papers to sell you!"

"Whoa!" called Mun Bun again. But the horse did not stop.

Just then a policeman came down the street. He saw Mun Bun on the seat of the wagon, and he saw the cook waving at him and calling. And the policeman needed to take only one look to make him feel sure that Mun Bun

was not the junkman's little boy driving the wagon. Mun Bun was not dressed as a junkman's little boy would probably be dressed.

"That's funny," said the policeman to himself. "I must see about this." He walked toward the wagon. By this time the cook had come out on the sidewalk. She knew the policeman.

"Stop him!" she called, pointing to the wagon. "Stop that junkman!"

"That isn't a junkman," said the officer.

"Well, stop that junk boy then, Mr. Mulligan," begged the cook, smiling at the policeman.

"Nor yet it isn't a junk boy," said the officer. "He doesn't belong on that wagon."

"Do you mean to say he stole it?" asked the cook. "Mrs. Rynsler has some junk she wants to get out of the cellar, and——"

"This boy'll never take it," said Mr. Mulligan, the policeman. "In the first place he's too little, and in the second place he isn't a junk boy. I must see about this," and, hurrying along for a little distance, then walking out to the curb, he reached out his hand and stopped the horse. It was not hard

work. The bony horse was ready to stop almost any time.

"Whoa!" said the policeman.

"Whoa!" echoed Mun Bun, and he smiled at the officer.

"Where are you going?" asked Mr. Mulligan.

"I'm having a ride," said Mun Bun. "The junkman is at my Aunt Jo's house, and I got up on the seat and I'm having a ride!"

"Land love us! And look at the size of him!" murmured the cook, who had followed the policeman.

"He is little," said the policeman. "But you'd better get down, my little man. You might fall off."

"I had a nice ride, anyhow," said Mun Bun, as the policeman lifted him down from the wagon.

"But now I've got to find out where you live, and who owns this rig," went on the officer.

"The idea of him drivin' off with it all alone—the likes of him!" murmured the wondering cook.

"Oh, he's a smart little chap!" said the po-

liceman, smiling at Mun Bun. "But, unless I'm mistaken, here comes the real junkman. He looks worried, too."

Around the corner of the street came the man who had been talking to William in Aunt Jo's yard. He was running hard, and his hat had fallen off.

"My horse! My wagon!" he cried. "Somebody ran away with them!"

"No, they didn't, Ike!" said the policeman, who had seen the junk collector before. "Your horse just walked away with this boy, and it's lucky the little chap didn't fall off the seat. Get on now, and drive back where you came from. Where does this boy belong?"

"How should I know?" asked the junkman. "I never saw him before."

"Well, he must have got on the wagon at the last place you stopped," said the officer. "Where was that?"

"Oh, sure! I know what you mean!" exclaimed the junkman. "I know the lady's house. Her automobile man often sells me old papers. I can tell you," and he did, mentioning Aunt Jo's house.

"I'll just take the boy back," said the policeman.

His hand in that of the big policeman, Mun Bun went back gladly enough, and just in time, too, for his mother, looking out and "counting noses" had not seen him with the other children, and, fearing he had wandered away, she was just starting out to look for him.

"Where have you been?" she cried, as she saw Mun Bun with a policeman.

"Oh, I had a nice ride," answered the little boy.

"He was on the junk wagon," Mr. Mulligan explained.

"Oh, ho! So it was you who ran with Ike's rig, was it?" asked William. "Well, well! He was frightened when he didn't see his horse out in front where he had left it. How do you like the junk business, Mun Bun?"

"I like the horse, and I did drive him, I did!" said the little fellow proudly.

"Well, don't do it again," sighed Mrs. Bunker.

"No'm, I won't!" promised Mun Bun.

The six little Bunkers always promised this whenever they did anything they ought not to have done. But the trouble was that they did something different the next time, and not the same thing they were told not to do.

"I wish I'd had a ride with you," said Margy, as her little brother, after the policeman had gone, told what had happened.

"Well, I don't!" exclaimed Mrs. Bunker.

So Mun Bun got safely back home again, and the rest of the day his mother saw to it that he played in the yard and around the house with his brothers and sisters.

"Did anybody ever come for the pocketbook and the sixty-five dollars?" asked Rose one day, after breakfast, when the six little Bunkers were wondering what to do to have fun.

"No, we haven't yet found an owner," said her father. "But there is time enough yet."

"And you didn't find my doll that the balloons took away, did you?"

"Not yet, Rose. I'm afraid Lily is gone forever," answered her mother. "Some day I'll get you a new doll."

"Yes; but she wouldn't be Lily," said Rose, and she felt quite bad about what had happened.

Out in the yard went the children to play. Russ was making what he said was going to be a kite, and Laddie and Violet were playing in the sand. Rose was watching Parker bake a cake and Margy and Mun Bun walked up and down the porch, pulling two little rubber dolls in a thread box, which they pretended was a big automobile.

Pretty soon, down the street came a two-wheeled cart, pushed by a man who had gold rings in his ears, and the cart made a cheerful whistling sound.

"Oh, listen!" cried Mun Bun.

"It's like a choo-choo car!" said Margy.

"Let's go and look at it!" cried Mun Bun.

"All right," agreed his sister.

Leaving the thread-box automobile and the two little dolls on the porch, the two small children ran down to the front gate to look at the whistling wagon.

CHAPTER XV

LADDIE'S FUNNY RIDDLE

"DOESN'T it make a nice noise?" asked Mun Bun of Margy.

"Terrible nice," agreed the little girl. "What makes it?"

Mun Bun looked at the whistling wagon. It was, as I have said, a two-wheeled cart, and was pushed by a man who had gold rings in his ears. His face was very dark, too, but he smiled pleasantly at the children.

"It's a teakettle, that's what makes it," said Mun Bun, as he looked. "See the steam coming out, just like it does out of the kettle in Parker's kitchen," and he pointed to something on one end of the cart.

This something looked like a little stove, and the children could see the glow of fire in one end of it. And, as Mun Bun had said, steam was coming from what seemed to be a spout.

"The steam whistles," said Mun Bun.

"Yes," agreed Margy. "I like it!"

The steam did make a shrill whistling sound.

The wagon was out in front of Aunt Jo's house now, and suddenly Mun Bun sniffed the air. He smelled something good.

"Oh, I know what it is!" he cried. "It's peanuts! The man is roasting peanuts and they whistles to tell him they're done. Don't you 'member, down at the corner by Daddy's office, home, there's a man an' he sells peanuts and they whistles."

"Oh, yes!" said Margy. "I 'members! I likes peanuts, too!"

"So do I!" said Mun Bun.

The man with the gold rings in his ears was stopping in front of Aunt Jo's house now. He smiled at the children, while the steam from the hot peanut-roaster made a louder whistling sound, and the man yelled:

"Hot peanuts, five cents a bag!"

"Oh, I wish we had some!" sighed Mun Bun.

"So do I," added his sister. "Have you five cents, Mun Bun?"

"Nope! Has you five cents, Margy?"

"No."

Mun Bun thought for a few seconds while the smiling Italian man, with the whistling wagon, looked at the two little Bunkers hanging on Aunt Jo's gate.

"Please go 'way!" said Mun Bun. "We hasn't got any five cents for your hot peanuts."

"No gotta five cents?" asked the Italian.

"No," and Mun Bun shook his head.

"An' we like peanuts," added Margy. "If you've any left over you could give us some."

"Hot peanuts—five a bag!" said the peddler in a sort of sing-song voice.

"Please go 'way!" begged Mun Bun again. "They smells awful good, but we hasn't got any five centies!"

"Maybe you go in th' house, li'l' boy, you get money," the Italian went on.

Margy looked at Mun Bun and Mun Bun looked at Margy.

"Oh, maybe we could!" exclaimed the little girl eagerly. "Let's go an' ask, Mun Bun!"

"All right!" said he. "We will!"

And they did. Into the room where Aunt

Jo and Mother Bunker were sewing burst the two children, out of breath from their run up the gravel drive.

"Oh, Mother!" cried Mun Bun. "He wants five cents."

"An' he's got a whistlin' wagon!" added Margy.

"An' they smell awful good!" went on her brother.

"Come an' hear the whistle," begged the little girl.

"My goodness me!" cried Aunt Jo. "What is this all about?"

"It's hot peanuts—five a bag!" answered Mun Bun, in a sing-song voice almost like the Italian's.

"But we haven't the five cents," added Margy. "An' we want some peanuts."

"Well, I think you may have some," said Mrs. Bunker. "I'll come down to the whistling wagon with you and see about it."

Margy and Mun Bun led her down to the front gate, where the peanut man, still smiling, was waiting. The hot oven on his wagon, in which he roasted the peanuts, was still whistling. Afterward Daddy Bunker

told the children that the steam came out and made the whistling sound by puffing itself through a tin thing with holes in it, just as a boy blows his breath through the same kind of tin thing to make a whistle.

"And the reason the Italian puts water in the top of his peanut-roaster is so that the peanuts in the bags, where he puts them to keep warm, will not burn," the father of the six little Bunkers told them. "The whistling is like the bell the old-fashioned ice-cream man used to ring. People hear it and come to buy, just as you did."

Mrs. Bunker found the Italian's peanuts fresh and nicely browned and roasted, and she bought enough for all the children.

"You have to thank Margy and Mun Bun for them," she said to Russ, Rose and the twins. "They first heard the whistling wagon and ran out to see what it was."

The children had a sort of little play-party with the peanuts, though Laddie stuffed some of his in his pocket.

"I'm going to save 'em," he said.

"What for?" asked Russ, who had his kite partly finished.

"Oh, maybe I'll see an elephant in a circus parade," the little boy answered.

"Circus parades never come up in our Back Bay section," said Aunt Jo with a smile. "So I don't believe you'll see an elephant, Laddie."

"Oh, well, then I can eat the peanuts myself," he returned. "But maybe I might see a squirrel."

"Yes, we have some of them in our parks," went on Aunt Jo. "And I have seen them so tame that they would come up and take a nut from your fingers. Some day we'll go to the park and look for the little fellows. But I'm afraid you won't have any peanuts left then, Laddie."

"Well, we can get some more," said the little boy with a laugh.

It was a little later that same afternoon, when Rose, who was out on the porch, getting her doll dressed for supper, as she said, came running in, looking very much excited.

"Well, what is it now?" asked her mother. "Has Mun Bun or any of the others, ridden off on a junk wagon?"

"Oh, no," answered the little girl. "But Laddie went off down the street with his pea-

nuts in his pocket, and now he's come back and he has a funny riddle."

"A funny riddle!" exclaimed Mrs. Bunker. "What do you mean? Is it a riddle about the peanuts?"

"I don't know," answered Rose. "But Laddie has something hid under his coat, and he asked me to guess what it was, so it must be a riddle. And it makes a funny squeaking noise."

"My goodness!" exclaimed Mrs. Bunker. "I must see what Laddie's riddle is this time!"

CHAPTER XVI

ROSE BREAKS HER SKATE

Out on the porch Mrs. Bunker found her six children, for Rose had followed her mother out of the house, finally running ahead of her to see if any one had yet guessed Laddie's latest riddle.

"What have you there, Sonny?" asked Laddie's mother, as she saw him standing in front of Russ, Rose and the others, with something under his coat.

"He says it's a riddle," explained Russ.

"It is, sort of!" declared Laddie. "Yet 'tisn't zactly a riddle. I just told 'em to guess what I had under my coat."

"Where'd you get it?" asked Aunt Jo, who came out to see what the fun was about.

"I got it with the peanuts I had in my pocket," the little boy answered.

"Oh, then it's a squirrel!" guessed Rose.

"No, it isn't a squirrel," said Laddie, shaking his head.

"It's got a tail! I can see it!" cried Vi, as she stooped down and looked under her brother's coat. "I can see it sticking out. It's brown."

"Yes, it's got a tail," admitted Laddie.

"Is it a kite?" asked Russ, for he had not yet finished the one he was making.

"Nope! 'Tisn't a kite!" Laddie answered. "It's alive, and kites aren't that way!"

"They wiggle around as if they were alive, sometimes," said Rose.

"Oh, I heard it squeak!" cried Mun Bun. "Is it a little kittie?"

Again Laddie shook his head.

"Nope," he answered, "'tisn't a kittie. But it's got fur on. Now I'll give you each one more guess for my riddle, and——"

But Laddie's "riddle" seemed to think the fun had gone on long enough, and it didn't want to be guessed about any more. All at once the little boy began to wiggle and try to hold something still beneath his coat—something which seemed very much alive indeed.

"Oh! Oh! Oh, dear!" cried Laddie, but he was laughing.

"What's the matter?" asked his mother.

"It—it's *tickling* me!" he exclaimed. "Oh—there it is!"

As he spoke a funny little wrinkled black face, followed by a little brown furry body and a long tail, scrambled out from under Laddie's buttoned coat and sat on his shoulder.

"Oh, look!" cried Rose.

"It's a black pussy with a long tail!" cried Violet.

"No, it isn't!" Russ exclaimed. "It's a monkey! That's what it is! A monkey!"

"A monkey!" repeated Mrs. Bunker. "Why, so it is. Oh, Laddie boy! where did you get a monkey?"

Laddie put up his hand to stroke the funny little creature, which seemed to like it, crouching down on Laddie's shoulder and nestling close to him. The monkey was not much larger than a cat.

"Where'd you get it?" repeated the children's mother.

"Have they got any more? Can I get

one?" cried Russ. "I'll go and find some peanuts!"

"Don't let him wind his tail on me!" begged Mun Bun, hiding behind his mother's skirts.

"Can he play a hand-organ?" asked Violet.

The children were laughing so hard, and asking so many questions as they crowded around Laddie, that their mother exclaimed:

"Oh, my dear six little Bunkers! please be quiet a minute until I can hear what Laddie has to say. Tell us where you got such a cute little riddle!"

"I got him with peanuts," Laddie said. "He was up in a tree and I saw him, and I held out some peanuts in my hand and he came down and sat on my shoulder and ate 'em and then I put him under my coat and he liked it and I brought him home."

"But where did you find him?" asked Aunt Jo. "In what tree?"

"Oh, just down by the corner at the end of this street," answered Laddie with a wave of his hand.

"Mercy," gasped Aunt Jo, "are monkeys beginning to make their homes in the trees

of the Boston streets?" and she and Mother Bunker laughed.

"But was he up a tree?" asked Russ.

"Yes, he was," Laddie went on. "First I thought it was a cat, but when I saw him hang by his tail I knew it wasn't a cat."

"Oh, we're finding lots of things!" cried Rose. "I found a pocketbook, and now Laddie finds a monkey."

"And I'm going to keep it and get a hand-organ and then I'm going around and take in pennies," said the little boy, on whose shoulder the monkey was still perched, looking here and there at the other children, and wrinkling up his funny black face.

"I know where it came from," said Russ, after thinking a moment.

"Where?" asked Vi. "Do you mean out of a circus?"

"No," answered Russ. "But it must have got away from a hand-organ man."

"I think that's just what happened," said Aunt Jo. "Hand-organ men, with monkeys fast to the ends of long strings, often come up this way, and play what they call music, and they let the funny little animals go after

the pennies. One of these Italians must have been around here with his music-machine, and his monkey must have run away from him and hidden up in a tree where you saw him, Laddie."

"But I found him, and he's mine. I want to keep him," said the little boy. "He's awful soft and fuzzy, and he likes me."

Indeed the monkey was a nice, clean little chap, and he seemed to like Laddie. And he seemed to like to have the other children pet him, also. He wore a funny little red jacket and a green cap, and every now and then he would take off his cap and hold it out, as he had been taught to do, for pennies.

Mun Bun, who had been afraid the monkey would wind its long tail around him, came out from behind his mother's skirts, and even dared to pet Laddie's "riddle," as they called it.

"He's awful nice!" said Mun Bun.

"He'd make a lovely doll," observed Rose. "I wish I had a doll that was alive."

"I'll let you play with him sometimes," promised Laddie. "I'm going to call him 'Peanuts' 'cause he likes 'em so."

"Well, that would be a nice name for a monkey," said Mrs. Bunker. "But don't get your heart set on keeping this one, Laddie."

"Why not, Mother? Can't I have him?"

"I'm afraid not. In the first place Aunt Jo has no place in her Boston home for a monkey, and, in the second place, Alexis, the big dog, might bark at Peanuts and scare him."

Alexis was not there just then, or he would have seen the monkey, and surely would have barked, as he always did when he saw anything new or strange.

"Another reason why you can't keep him," said Mother Bunker, "is that the Italian hand-organ grinder will want his monkey himself. That is how he makes his living—by having the monkey collect pennies for him."

"But can I keep him until the organ man comes?" asked Laddie, as he cuddled his "riddle" in his arms.

"Oh, yes, I guess you can keep him until then," said Mrs. Bunker. "We couldn't turn the poor little monkey loose, anyhow, or dogs would chase him. We'll see what your father says when he comes home."

"And we can have some fun now, with Peanuts," added Russ. "We can tie a string to his collar and make-believe we have a circus."

"Maybe he'll bite," said Margy.

"He didn't bite me," Laddie explained, "and I carried him under my coat from down the street. He tickled me though, when he wanted to get out."

Mrs. Bunker and Aunt Jo said the children could play with the monkey awhile on the side porch, fastening it by a string attached to the collar around its neck, so it could not get away.

"The Italian may be along pretty soon looking for it," said William, the chauffeur, who had been called from the garage to see Laddie's new pet.

"Peanuts," as the six little Bunkers called the monkey, seemed to enjoy being with them. He climbed about the porch, and came down when they held out in their hands bread, bits of crackers or cake, which the monkey liked to eat.

The children were having lots of fun with their funny little pet, and they were talking

over and over again their wish that they might keep him, when, from out in front, came the sound of a hand-organ. It played rather a sad and doleful tune, and, at the sound of it, the monkey seemed to prick up his ears, much as a dog might do.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Rose. "Maybe that's the hand-organ man that owns this monkey."

"If it is I'd better see about it," said Aunt Jo. "I want you children to have all the fun you can, but we don't want to keep a poor man's monkey, any more than we do the poor woman's purse, though she hasn't come for that yet."

William, the chauffeur, who also heard the hand-organ tune, went out in front, and came back to tell Aunt Jo that the Italian had indeed lost his monkey, and was looking everywhere for it.

"Tell him to come in," said Miss Bunker.

And a little later, walking along and grinding out the doleful tune, the Italian came into the yard.

"It this your monkey?" asked Aunt Jo, pointing to the one that Laddie had coaxed down out of the tree with peanuts.

"Oh, Petro! Petro!" cried the Italian, leaning his hand-organ up against a tree and rushing to the porch. "Ah, Petro! I have found you again, my baby!" and he held out his arms. The monkey made a jump for them, and sat up on the man's shoulder, chattering and taking off and putting on his green cap so often that, as Russ said, he looked like a moving picture.

"Ah, Petro! Petro!" cried the hand-organ man, and then he began to talk to the monkey in Italian, which the little creature seemed to understand, for he chattered back, though of course he spoke monkey talk, or, maybe, jungle talk.

"Is that your animal?" asked William.

"Sure, he mine!" exclaimed the Italian. "His name Petro! I make-a de music down de street, an' a big dog chase after Petro! He break-a de string an' jump oop de tree. I no can find! Now I have him back! Ah, my Petro!"

"Well, the children will be sorry to lose their pet," said Aunt Jo, "but I'm glad you have him back."

"I glad. Vera mooch-a glad, too!" said

the Italian, taking off his hat, and bowing to Aunt Jo and Mrs. Bunker. "Petro bring me in pennies. I play for you, but I no want-a pennies. No take pennies—you find my Petro."

"This little boy found him," said William, pointing to Laddie.

"I gave him peanuts," said Laddie. "He was up a tree."

"Mooch 'bliged," said the Italian. "I make-a de music for you. Petro do tricks."

Then he fastened the long cord he had in his pocket to Petro's collar, and began to grind out what he called "music." He also made the monkey do several tricks, such as turning somersaults or climbing trees and jumping from one branch to another.

Then, with more thanks, and promising to come and play again for them, and not to let Petro take any pennies, the Italian went on his way with the monkey and the hand-organ.

Laddie and the others were sorry to lose their pet, but, as Daddy Bunker said afterward, the monkey and Alexis might not have been good friends.

"Well, I found a monkey, and somebody

came for it," said Laddie that night. "But nobody has come for the pocketbook yet."

"And, if they don't, I'm going to have the money," said Rose. "Anyhow, I can have some of it, daddy says. And I'm going to buy a pair of new roller skates, 'cause my old ones are 'most worn out."

However, Rose could still skate on them, and speaking of them as she did, made her think of them the next day. So, when she had put her dolls to "sleep," the little girl went out roller-skating on the sidewalk in front of Aunt Jo's house.

Rose had not been skating long before her mother heard her crying.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" Rose was saying.

"What's the matter?" asked her mother, hurrying out to the porch. "Did you fall and hurt yourself, Rose, my dear?"

"No. But I struck my foot against the curb-stone, and now one of my roller skates is broken, and I can't have any fun!"

Rose held up one foot. The skate that had been on it was now in two pieces, and Mrs. Bunker saw that it could not easily be fixed again. It was too bad!

CHAPTER XVII

THE SKATE WAGON

While Rose and her mother were looking at the little girl's broken roller skate, Russ came along. He had been in the yard, playing with Alexis, and his clothes were covered with grass, some of it green and some of it dried.

"But I had lots of fun," said Russ, as he whistled a merry tune. "And grass doesn't hurt my old clothes."

"Alexis always has on his old clothes. He doesn't have to change his to play," said Laddie, who was with Russ.

Just then the two boys saw their mother and Rose looking at the broken skate.

"What's the matter?" Russ wanted to know.

"Oh, I bumped my foot on the curbstone," answered Rose. "And now look!"

She held out the skate that was broken in two parts.

"Perhaps Russ can fix it," said Mrs. Bunker with a smile. "He makes so many things that he might mend this."

Russ took the pieces of the skate in his hand. Rose still had the other, the unbroken one, on her foot.

"I could push myself along on one skate," said the little girl, "but it isn't much fun. Can you fix it, Russ?"

Her brother shook his head.

"I don't guess anybody could fix that broken skate," he said.

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Rose.

"But," went on Russ, "I know how to make something that you can have lots of fun with; and so can I!"

"Can I, too?" asked Laddie.

"We all can," said Russ. "We can take turns."

"On what?" asked Rose.

"A skate wagon," answered Russ. "I saw a boy downtown have one—the day we went to the movies. You take a good roller skate, and pull it apart. Then you put two of the

wheels on the front end of a board, and the two other wheels on the back end."

"Well, then what do you do?" asked Laddie, for Russ had come to a pause.

"Well, then you nail a stick up on the front end of the board, for a handle, and you stand on it—you stand on the board, I mean—and you ride downhill on the sidewalk on the skate wagon. It's fun!"

"Say, let's do it!" cried Laddie. "I'll help you, Russ! Give us that one skate that isn't busted, Rose, and we'll make a skate wagon."

Laddie knelt down and began to unfasten the strap of the one good skate, which was still on Rose's left foot.

"Stop! Stop it!" cried the little girl, pulling back her leg.

"Hold still!" exclaimed Laddie. "I can't get your skate off if you wiggle so much."

"I don't want my skate off!" insisted Rose.

"Then how am I going to make a skate wagon?" asked Russ in some surprise.

"I can push myself along on one foot, and skate that way," went on Rose. "If I let you boys take my skate to make a wagon of, you'll be riding all the time and I won't have

any fun. I'm going to keep my own skate. So there!"

"We'll give you some rides; won't we, Russ?" asked Laddie.

"'Course we will! Lots of 'em!" added the older boy.

"I'd let them take my skate, if I were you," said Mrs. Bunker. "One skate is not of much use to you, Rose, and if Russ can make a sort of wagon, or skatemobile, as I have heard them called, it will be fun for all of you."

"All right," said Rose, after thinking over what her mother said. "But I got to have my turns."

"Yes, you may all have turns," said Mother Bunker, who usually settled disputes in this gentle way. "Now, Russ and Laddie, let us see you make the funny coaster wagon."

Rose let Laddie take the roller skate off her foot, and then Russ took the two front wheels from the two back ones. He had looked at a "skatemobile" a few days before, and, being a clever little chap, he remembered how it was made.

"I can get the pieces of board out in the

garage," said Russ. "I saw William have some, and he said I could take them."

Russ did not find it quite so easy to make the coaster wagon as he had thought. To fasten the wheels of the skate to the board he used many nails, and bent most of them. Then William, who had been doing something to Aunt Jo's automobile, came out and watched Russ at work.

"Ouch!" Russ suddenly exclaimed.

"What's the matter?" asked the chauffeur.

"I pounded my finger!" said the little boy, as he popped it into his mouth. "It hurts!" But he did not cry.

"Yes, it generally does hurt when you hit your finger or thumb with a hammer," said William. "Better let me finish that for you. I can put the wheels on so they won't come off."

"I wish you would then," said Russ. "We want to see how it works."

William did not take long to fasten the four wheels to the long, narrow board, two wheels on each end, so that it could easily coast down the sidewalk hill in front of Aunt Jo's house. Then, to the front of the nar-

row board, just as Russ had explained, William nailed a handle, making it stick straight up, so it could be grasped by whoever was taking a ride.

"Now your skate wagon is done," he said.

"Let's go out and try it!" cried Laddie.

"But I've got to have a turn," insisted Rose. "It's my skate."

"You shall all have turns," put in Mother Bunker, who had come out to the garage to see how matters were going. "That is, all except Mun Bun and Margy. I'm afraid they're too little to coast. They might fall off."

"I'll hold 'em on and give 'em a ride," offered Russ, who was very kind to his little brother and sister.

"You can have the first ride," said Laddie to Rose, "'cause it's your roller skate."

"I can't go first," answered the little girl. "I don't know how you do it. You go first, Russ."

Russ was very willing to do this. So he took the skate wagon to the top of the sidewalk "hill," as the little Bunkers called it, and then he put one foot on the flat board, to

which were fastened the roller-skate wheels.

"You have to push yourself along with one foot, just the same as when you're skating on one skate," explained Russ. "Then when you get to going fast you put the other foot on the board and stand there, and you hold on tight and down you go."

"Show me!" begged Rose, jumping up and down because she was so excited and pleased.

And then Russ went riding downhill, almost as nicely as he coasted on the snow in winter.

"Is it fun?" shouted Laddie, from where he stood with Rose at the top of the hill—only almost no one would have called such a slight grade a "hill."

"Lots of fun!" answered Russ.

Down to the bottom of the hill he rode, and then he walked up.

"Now it's your turn, Rose," he said, as he handed her the skatemobile. But the little girl shook her head.

"I'll watch a little more," she said. "Let Laddie go."

So Laddie coasted down. Then Rose took her turn. Down the sidewalk hill she coasted

on the skate wagon, and she was just turning around to wave to her mother and her brothers, who were watching her, when all of a sudden out from a gate ran a little dog. Right in front of Rose, and a little ahead of her he ran, and then he stood on the sidewalk and barked at her.

"Look out, Rose! Look out!" cried her mother.

"Steer to one side! Turn out for him!" yelled Russ.

"Stick out your foot and stop the skate wagon, same as you stop yourself on roller skates," cried Laddie.

But Rose, it seemed, could do none of these things. Straight for the little dog she coasted.

What was going to happen?

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SPINNING TOPS

Rose was not able to stop the skate wagon, on which she was coasting down the sidewalk hill in front of Aunt Jo's house. Nor did the little dog seem to want to get out of the way. He just stood in front of Rose, while she was coasting toward him, and barked and wagged his tail. And it was almost as if he said:

"Well, what's all this? Are you coming to give me a ride?"

"Get out of the way! Get out of the way —please!" begged Rose. "I'll bump into you, same as I bumped into the curbstone, if you don't get out of the way, little dog; and then I'll run over you! Get out of the way!"

But the little dog just stayed right there.

Of course, if Rose had thought about it, she might have jumped off the skate wagon,

and let that go on by itself, shoving it to one side.

But she was coasting down the stone sidewalk hill quite rapidly now, and she was so excited that she never once thought of getting off or even trying to turn the skate wagon aside. Straight for the barking little dog she coasted.

"Oh, we must stop her!" cried Mrs. Bunker, running down the slope after the little girl.

"I'll get her, Mother!" cried Russ. "I guess I can run faster than you can."

But there was no chance for either of them to catch Rose before something happened. And the something that happened was that Rose ran right into the little dog. Right into him she ran with the skate wagon.

"Ki-yi-yi-yip! Ki-yi! Yip! Yip!" yelled the little dog.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" sobbed Rose, for she was crying.

Bang! went the skate wagon over into the gutter.

The little dog—Well, I was almost going to say he laughed to see so much sport, but that

little dog is in Mother Goose, if I remember rightly, and this little dog didn't laugh. He was very much frightened, and he was hurt a little, and so was Rose. So the little dog just tucked his tail in between his hind legs, and back he ran into the yard out of which he had come to see what was going on when he heard the skate wagon rattling down the sidewalk hill.

By this time Russ, Laddie, and their mother had come up to Rose.

"Are you much hurt?" asked Mrs. Bunker. "There now, don't cry. We'll take care of you!"

"It—it's my knees!" sobbed Rose. "I scraped 'em! And is my skate wagon all busted?"

"No, it's all right," said Laddie, as he picked it up from the gutter where it had rolled after Rose fell off. "It's as good as ever."

"And your knees aren't hurt much—only scratched," said Mrs. Bunker, as she looked. Rose wore socks, and her legs, above her shoes, and partly above her knees were bare. "See if you can't stand up," urged Mrs.

Bunker, for Rose was as limp as a rag in her arms.

"Stand up and have some more rides!" exclaimed Russ.

"No, I don't want any more rides on the old skate wagon!" cried his sister. "I don't like it."

"Then we can have it all ourselves, Russ!" exclaimed Laddie.

"No, you can't either!" said Rose, and she suddenly stopped crying. "You can't have my skate wagon. I want it myself!"

"But if you can't stand up you can't ride on it——" began Mrs. Bunker.

"But I can stand up, Mother!" cried Rose, and she did, showing that nothing much was the matter with her.

"See, then you're not hurt," said her mother. "Now don't begin to cry again, and you can have some more rides. But perhaps you had better not coast down any more hills. Just ride along the sidewalk as you did on your roller skates. That will be best."

"Yes, maybe I'll do that," said Rose. "Where's the dog that made me run into him?"

The little dog was safely behind his own fence now, looking out through the pickets and barking. Perhaps he wondered what it was all about, and what had happened to him. He had been knocked about a bit, and bruised, but not much hurt. Only he was "all mussed up," as Russ said, after a look at him.

"Well, I guess he won't get in the way of your roller-skate wagon again," said Mrs. Bunker. "Now you can take some more rides, Rose. Your knees are all right."

And so they were, after they had been washed off with a little warm water. Then Rose and her brothers, with Violet taking a turn now and then, had fine fun on the skate-mobile. They rode down the hill though, as they found they could steer better when going fast.

Mun Bun and Margy came from the yard, where they had been playing in the sand pile, and they, too, wanted rides. Russ and Laddie held them on, for the smaller children were hardly old enough to coast alone, though Mun Bun did drive off in the junk cart, as I have told you. But that was different. The

roller-skate wagon went faster than the junkman's horse.

So the six little Bunkers had fun on the skate wagon, and as the days went on they were more and more glad they had come to Aunt Jo's house to spend a part of their vacation.

It was early in August, and there was much of the summer before them. The weather was hot, but there was plenty of shade around Aunt Jo's house, so that it was almost as nice as it had been at Grandma Bell's.

"Are we going to stay here until vacation is all over?" asked Russ of his father one day.

"Well, I'm not sure," he said. "Cousin Tom spoke once of having us come down to see him."

"Down to the seashore, do you mean?" asked Rose.

"Yes, down to Seaview, New Jersey."

"Oh, it would be dandy there!" cried Russ. "I could go swimming in the ocean, couldn't I?"

"Well, you might go in if the water wasn't too deep," his father said with a smile. "But

we'll talk about that later. Rose, where is that pocketbook you found?" he asked.

"Why? Do you know who owns it?" the little girl asked.

"No, but I want to look at it again. Perhaps there may be a card, or something, that will tell the address of the person who lost it and the sixty-five dollars."

"But we did look," said Russ, "and we couldn't find any."

"I thought perhaps the card or paper might have slipped through a hole in the lining," said Mr. Bunker, "as the real estate papers I searched for so long slipped inside the lining of the old coat I gave the lumberman. Where is the pocketbook?"

"Mother has it," answered Rose. "I'll get it for you, Daddy!"

She ran to her mother, and soon returned with the purse. The sixty-five dollars had been put in a safe in Aunt Jo's house, but the sad little letter was still in the wallet.

Mr. Bunker read it over again, and then carefully looked through the pocketbook. It was an old one, and the lining was torn, but there was no slip of paper or card in any hole

that would tell to whom the pocketbook should be returned.

"I'll advertise once more," said Mr. Bunker, "and then, if no one claims it, I guess the money will belong to you, Rose."

"And can I spend it?"

"Oh, no indeed! Not all of it. A little, perhaps; but the rest will be put away for you, until you grow to be a young lady. Still I would rather give it to whoever owns it."

"So should I," said Rose softly. "I'd like to get back my lost doll, that I sent up in the balloon airship, and I guess the pocketbook lady would like to get her money back."

They all thought the pocketbook belonged to a poor woman. They got this idea from the letter—that is, the grown-up folks and the older children did. Mun Bun and Margy didn't think much about it, one way or the other. All they cared about was having fun.

And the six little Bunkers certainly had fun at Aunt Jo's. They played in the yard or around the garage; they went for auto rides, on little excursions and picnics, they played with Alexis, the big dog, and they rode on the skatemobile.

One day a boy named Tom Martin, who lived about half a block from Aunt Jo's house, came up in front and called:

"Hi, Russ! Ho, Laddie! Come on out and play tops!"

The two older Bunker boys had become acquainted with Tom, and liked to play with him. Now they heard him calling and Russ answered:

"We'll be out in a minute; soon as we've had some bread and jam."

"Bring Tom a piece, too," suggested Laddie, for Parker, the good-natured cook, was giving the boys a little treat.

"Yes, I'll give you a slice for your friend," she said.

So she spread him a nice slice of bread and jam, and Russ and Laddie, carrying their own, which they ate on the way, also took one to their new playmate.

"Let's play tops," suggested Tom. "We can go down the street where the sidewalk is big and smooth, and spin 'em there."

"All right," agreed Russ. "We'll have some fun."

Down the street they went, to a corner,

where a big apartment house stood close to the sidewalk. There the pavement was smooth, just the place for spinning tops.

"There, mine's spinning first!" cried Tom, as he flung his top down, quickly pulling the string away, and thus making the top whirl around very fast. "Let's see if either of you can hit my top with yours."

"I can!" said Russ, and he threw his top at Tom's with all his might.

Russ didn't hit his playmate's top, but he did hit something else. Up into the air bounced Russ's top, and, the next moment, there was a crash of glass.

"Oh!" cried Tom. "You've broken a window!"

CHAPTER XIX

FLYING A KITE

THAT was just what had happened. When Russ threw his top down so hard, it had bounced up again from the sidewalk, and had gone sailing through the air against one of the lower windows of the apartment house which stood so close to the pavement. And the top went right through the glass.

The three little boys were so surprised that they just stood there, looking at the shower of broken glass on the pavement. Then Tom cried:

"Oh, we'd better run!"

"What for?" asked Russ.

"'Cause you broke the window. The lady or the man'll come out an' they'll get a policeman."

Russ said nothing for two or three seconds. Laddie, who was just going to bounce

down his top, to spin it, still held it in his hand. He didn't want to break a glass.

"Come on!" cried Tom in a whisper. "Come on 'fore they catch us!"

Russ shook his head.

"No," he answered. "I'm not going to run. I'll stay here, and when they come out I'll tell 'em I busted it and my father will pay for it. That's what we always do; don't we, Laddie?"

"Yep," answered the smaller boy.

"Did you ever break windows before?" asked Tom, who had started to run away, but who came back when he saw that his two friends were not coming with him.

"We broke one at Grandma Bell's," said Russ.

"But she didn't make us pay for it," said Laddie.

"Tom Hardy, the hired man, put a new glass in," went on Russ. "And once we broke a window back home when we were playing ball. I threw the ball, and Laddie didn't grab it, and it went through a candy-store window, but we didn't run."

"What did you do?" asked Tom, to whom

this seemed something new. He looked up at the place where the window had been smashed. As yet no one had thrust a head out of the window or threatened to send for a policeman. "What did you do?" asked Tom again.

"Well, the lady who owned the candy store knew us," answered Russ, "and she knew our father would pay for the glass."

"Did he?"

"Why, of course he did!" exclaimed Laddie.

"But he said we each had to save up and give him back five cents—a penny at a time," added Russ. "That was to help pay for the glass, and make us—make us more careful, I guess he called it.

"Anyhow, that's what I'm going to do now. We'll wait, and when somebody comes out I'll tell 'em my father'll pay for the glass my top broke."

"Here comes somebody now!" whispered Tom, and surely enough a man, wearing blue overalls and looking as though he had been cleaning out a cellar, came from the basement door of the big apartment house.

"Who broke that glass?" he asked, and his voice was rather harsh.

"I—I did—with my top," spoke up Russ, but his voice trembled a little.

"Well, you'll have to pay for it!" went on the janitor, for such he was. "I've told you boys to keep away from here spinning your tops, and yet you will come! Now you've got to pay for it!"

"I never spun my top here before," said Russ.

"And I didn't either," added Laddie.

"That's right, Mr. Quinn," put in Tom, who seemed to know the janitor. "I brought 'em here. It's part my fault."

"Hum!" said the janitor. "This is something new, to have boys own up to it when they break windows, and not run away. Who did you say was going to pay for the glass?" he asked. "It'll cost about a dollar. Lucky for you Mr. Tanzy wasn't at home. It's in his parlor you broke the window, and he's awful cross."

Russ had thought the janitor himself was cross, at first, but now he did not think so, for the dusty man smiled.

"I'm going to pay for the glass—I am, and my brother," Russ went on. "I broke it."

"Have you got the money with you?" asked Mr. Quinn, the janitor.

"No," answered Russ. "I've only five cents. But you can have that, and my father'll give you the rest when I tell him."

"Who's your father?" asked the janitor.

"They're staying with their Aunt Jo," explained Tom Martin. "She lives on this street—Miss Bunker, you know."

"We're two of the six little Bunkers," said Russ.

"Oh, I'm glad to know that," and Mr. Quinn smiled again. "Well, as it happens, I used to be your aunt's furnace man, so I know her. If you're related to her you must be all right. I'll let you two little Bunkers go now, but your father must come and pay for the window."

"He will," promised Russ, who was glad no policeman had come along, though he had made up his mind to be brave, and not be afraid if one should happen to be called in by the janitor. But none was.

"I'll help pay for the window, too," said

Tom. "It was part my fault, 'cause I asked Russ and Laddie to come down here to play tops."

"Good-bye, boys!" the janitor called after them. "I'm sorry you had this accident, but I like the way you acted."

Russ, Laddie and Tom were sorry, too, for they knew their fathers would feel bad, not so much at having to pay out fifty cents each, as because the boys had played tops in a place where they might, almost any time, break a window.

Tom ought to have known better than to go down by the apartment house, for, more than once, he had been told to keep away, but Russ and Laddie had not. However, neither Mr. Martin nor Daddy Bunker scolded very much. They sent the money to the janitor, and told the boys just what Mr. Quinn had told them—to play tops on some other pavement. And this the boys did.

"But we got to have *some* fun," grumbled Russ.

"Oh, there are lots of other places where you can spin your tops without going down near the apartment house," said Mr. Bunker.

"Windows will get broken, once in a while, but I don't like it to happen too often."

"Did you get any answers to the advertisement about the lost pocketbook?" asked Mrs. Bunker of her husband that night, for he had said he would stop at the newspaper office and inquire.

"No," he replied. "I'm afraid whoever owns it does not read the papers. I wish I knew who it was."

"So do I," said Rose.

For, even though she would like to keep the money for herself, she knew it was better that the poor person, whose it was, should have it. But, so far, no one had come to claim the wallet and the sixty-five dollars.

After dinner one day Aunt Jo said:

"Who wants to go on an auto ride?"

"I do!" cried Rose and Violet.

"Me, too!" added Margy, and Mun Bun said something, though they could not be sure just what it was, as he was still chewing on a bit of cracker he had carried from the table with him.

"I guess he means he'll go, too," said his mother. "But after this, Mun Bun, my dear,

finish your eating at the table, and don't be dropping cracker crumbs all over Aunt Jo's floor."

"I get Alexis, and he pick 'em up," said Mun Bun; and he started for the door to let in the big dog.

"No, don't!" laughed Aunt Jo. "Alexis has just been given a bath by William, and our dog pet is wet. He'd be worse for the floor than a few crumbs are. I'll have them swept up, Mun Bun. But come, let's get ready for the auto ride."

When the time to go came, Russ and Laddie said they wanted to stay at home. This was unusual. Generally they were the first to want to go.

"Why aren't you coming?" asked Rose of Russ. "Maybe we might find my doll that sailed away with the balloons."

"Oh, I don't guess you will," said Russ. "Anyhow, Laddie and I are going to make some things when you're gone. We've got to make 'em so we can fly 'em with Tom Martin. He's going to make one, too."

"Will it fly?" asked Rose. "Oh, is it an airship?"

"No, it's just a kite," said Russ. "I started to make one, but I didn't finish. Now I'm going to make a good one so it will fly away up high. And so are Laddie and Tom. That's why we don't want to go in the auto."

"All right, then we'll leave you and Laddie at home with your father and William," said Aunt Jo, for she was going to run the car herself.

"Be good boys," begged Mrs. Bunker.

"We will!" promised Russ.

"And you won't spin tops and break any more windows, will you?" inquired Aunt Jo.

"Nope!" agreed Laddie. "We'll just fly kites, and they can't break windows, or do any thing else."

But you just wait and see what happens.

After Aunt Jo and the others had gone off in the car, Russ and Laddie got their paste, paper and string, and began making kites. Russ knew how pretty well, and he showed Laddie. They made kites with tails on them, as these are easier for small boys to build, though they are not so easy to fly as the kind without tails. The tails of kites get tangled in so many things.

"Now mine's done," said Russ, as he held up his finished toy.

"I wish mine was," replied Laddie.

"I'll help you," offered his brother, and he did.

The two boys were soon ready to go to a vacant lot not far from Aunt Jo's house, to fly their kites.

"A city's no place to fly kites," said Laddie. "We ought to be in the country."

"We ought to be at Grandma Bell's," agreed Russ. "That was a dandy place to fly kites—big fields and no telegraph wires to tangle the tail in."

However, they managed, after some hard work, to get their kites up into the air, and then they sat in the lot, holding the strings and sending up messengers.

CHAPTER XX

THE JUMPING ROPE

"My kite's higher than yours," said Laddie, as he looked at his plaything, away up in the air, and then at his brother's.

"Well, I haven't let out all my string yet," Russ answered. "I can make mine go up a lot higher than yours when I unwind some more cord, and I'm going to."

"I'm going to send up another messenger," said Laddie. "I haven't got any more string to let out, but maybe I could get some."

He took a small piece of paper, put a hole in it, and then slipped through this hole the stick to which his kite cord was tied. Then the piece of paper went sailing up the kite string, twirling around and around until it was half way to the kite itself.

"Look at my messenger go!" cried Laddie, as the piece of paper whirled around and

around in a brisk breeze. "Why don't you send up one, and we can have a race?"

"I will!" exclaimed Russ. "We'll have a race with the paper messengers, and then I'll get some more string, and send my kite higher."

"So'll I," decided Laddie. "Oh, Russ, we can even have a race with the kites!" he went on. "We'll see whose kite will go highest."

"Yes, we can do that," agreed the older boy. "Now I'll make a messenger."

So Russ did that, and as the messenger Laddie had put on was, by this time, nearly up to his kite, he put another on the string. The boys held them from going up until both were ready, and then, just as when they sometimes had a foot race, Russ cried:

"Go!"

They took their hands off the paper messengers, and up the strings they shot, the wind blowing them very fast.

"Look at 'em go! Look at 'em!" cried Laddie, dancing about in delight.

"And you'd better look out and not let go of your kite string, or that'll go, too," said

Russ. "Your kite'll fly away same as Rose's balloon airship did."

"I wonder if they'd go to the same place," said Laddie. "If my kite would be sure to fly to where Rose let the balloons fly to I'd let it go."

"Why would you?" asked Russ.

"'Cause then I could find Rose's doll for her. I could walk along by my kite string and keep on going and going and going, and then I'd come to the place where the kite was and there would be the basket with the doll in it."

"Yes, that would be nice," said Russ. "But I don't guess they'd go to the same place. You'd better hold on to your kite."

"I will," agreed Laddie. "I wonder how high we could let our kites go up?" he went on, as he watched the messengers whirling around the strings. "How far would they go?"

"They'd go as far as you had cord for," said Russ.

"Could they go away up to the sky?" asked Laddie.

"'Course they could," said Russ.

"The sky's awful far," went on Laddie, looking up at the blue part, across which the white, fleecy clouds were flying.

"Yes, it's far," assented Russ. "But we could get an awful lot of string, and let the kites go up."

"Could we do it now?" the smaller boy wanted to know. "I'd like to see my kite go up to the sky."

"Well, we could do it," Russ said. "But look! My messenger beat yours!" he suddenly cried. "It's away ahead!"

"So it is," assented Laddie. "Well, anyhow, I've got more of 'em up than you have."

"Now I'm going to get a lot of cord and send my kite up high," announced Russ, as he got up from the grass where he was sitting.

"Are you going to take your kite down?" his brother wanted to know.

Russ shook his head.

"I'm going to tie my kite string to a stone," he said. "That'll keep it from blowing away while I go into the house to get more cord. You watch my kite while I'm gone."

"I will," promised Laddie. "I'll tie my kite, too."

Russ tied the end of his cord to a heavy stone in the vacant lot near Aunt Jo's house, in which the boys were flying their kites. Laddie sat down on the grass, and looked up at the kites, which were like two birds, high in the air. Russ was gone some little time. It was harder than he thought it would be to find the right kind of cord. But he had made up his mind to send his kite up in the air as high as it would go, and he wanted plenty of string.

Suddenly Laddie, who was watching his own and his brother's kites, noticed that Russ's was acting very strangely. It bobbed and fluttered about a bit, and then began to sink down.

"I've got to pull on the cord," thought Laddie. Though he was younger than Russ he knew enough for this—when a kite starts to come down, to run with it, or to wind the cord in quickly. There wasn't much room in the vacant city lot to run, so Laddie began winding in the string of Russ's kite.

Then Laddie noticed that his own kite was bobbing about and coming down also.

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed the little boy. "I

can't wind 'em both in at once. I wish Russ would come!"

But Russ was still back at Aunt Jo's house, and Laddie, much as he wanted to save his brother's kite, wanted even more to save his own.

So Laddie let go of the string of his brother's kite, and began to pull in on his own. As he did so Russ's sank lower and lower, falling like a leaf, from side to side.

But as Laddie pulled on his cord his kite went higher and higher into the air, until, getting to a place higher up, where the wind was blowing stronger, it was out of danger.

But Russ's kite floated lower and lower, and Laddie dared not let go his own string to pull in his brother's. Just then Russ came running back with the cord he at last had found.

"Where's my kite?" he cried, as he reached the lot, and did not see his kite in the air.

"It started to come down, and so did mine, but I couldn't pull 'em both," said his brother. "I'm sorry, but——"

"Oh, well, maybe I can pull it up," said Russ, who was not going to find fault with

Laddie for what could not be helped. "I'll wind up the string as fast as I can."

So he did this, and at last he saw his kite come into sight above the houses in the next street. But the wind, low down, was not strong enough to carry the kite up again, and Russ saw that it was of no use. His kite still fluttered from side to side.

"I can't get it up again this way," he said to Laddie. "I've got to pull it all the way down, and then send it up again. And I'll make it go terrible high this time, 'cause I've got a lot of string."

"When mine comes down I'm going to send it up higher," said Laddie. But his kite was still well up in the air.

Russ pulled and pulled on his string, and finally he had his kite where he could see it. It was floating over the street near the vacant lot, and Russ was pulling it toward him, when, all of a sudden, something happened.

A woman, with a large hat on, was walking along the street, right under Russ's kite. Suddenly the kite swooped down, until the dangling tail touched the woman's hat. Russ, not seeing what had taken place, kept on

pulling on the string, winding it in. And, of course, you can easily guess what happened.

"Stop! Stop it, little boy!" called the woman. "Stop pulling on your kite string!"

"What for?" asked Russ, who had been looking at the stick on which he was winding his cord, wondering if it would be large enough to hold it all.

"Because you're pulling off my hat!"

And that is just what Russ was doing. The tail of the kite had become tangled in the trimming on the woman's hat, and Russ was pulling it off her head.

"Oh, please stop, little boy!" she cried, and she had to run along, following the kite across the street.

Then Russ stopped winding the string, and the woman, putting up her hands, took hold of the kite tail, so it did not quite pull off her hat. But it almost did.

"I—I'm sorry," Russ said, as he saw what had happened.

"Oh, that's all right," the woman answered with a laugh. "You couldn't help it. I have a little boy of my own, and he likes to fly his

kite, but he never got it tangled in my hat, that I remember. But it's all right. No harm is done. I can pin my hat on again, but my hair is rather mussed up, I'm afraid."

"You could go into my Aunt Jo's house and fix it," said Russ politely. "She has a looking-glass."

"Has she? That's nice," said the lady with another laugh. "But I have a little one of my own. See!" She opened her purse and showed a tiny, round mirror fastened inside. "If you'll hold that up, so I can see myself in it, I can put my hat on again and it will be all right," she went on.

This Russ did. His kite had fallen to the street, but it was not torn and was all right for putting up again. So he held the woman's mirror, which was in her pocketbook, as well as he could, while she smoothed out her hair and straightened her hat. Then, with a smile and a bow, she said:

"There! Is it all right?"

"It looks nice—just like my mother's," answered Russ, and the woman laughed as she took back her purse.

"Did you lose a pocketbook?" asked Russ.

"No," was the answer. "Why do you ask?"

"'Cause my sister Rose found one, and it had some money in, but nobody ever came to get it."

"Well, I hope you can fly your kite again," said the woman, as she walked away.

Russ picked up his kite and went back to the vacant lot with it. He tried to fly it, but the wind had gone down, and the toy would not rise. Laddie's, too, had begun to bob about, and he said:

"I guess I'll pull mine down before it falls."

"Well, we had some fun, anyhow," remarked Russ.

It was the next day, a fine, sunny one, that Rose and Violet, having played with their dolls until they were tired, wanted to do something else. Daddy Bunker had taken Russ and Laddie to a moving picture show, but as Rose and Violet had seen it once, they did not want to go again. Margy and Mun Bun were asleep, and the two girls didn't know what to play.

"I know how to have some fun," said Rose at last.

"How?" asked her sister.

"We can jump rope. I know where there's a piece of clothesline that Aunt Jo'll let us take."

"How can two of us jump rope?" asked Vi. "We'd both have to turn, so who could jump?"

"We can tie one end to a tree, and take turns turning," said Rose. "Then one of us can jump, and whoever misses has to turn for the other."

"Oh, yes, we can do it that way," assented Vi. So the two little girls ran to get the clothesline and soon they were jumping rope.

"It's lots of fun," said Vi, when it was her turn to have "three slow—pepper," while Rose turned, the other end of the rope being fast to a tree.

CHAPTER XXI

MUN BUN IN A HOLE

While Rose turned, Vi jumped, and the little girl was getting along nicely when she tripped, or the rope caught on her foot, and stopped.

"Now it's my turn!" exclaimed Rose. "You missed, and you have to turn for me."

"You made me trip!" exclaimed Vi. "You gave me the pepper before I was ready."

"You said to give you 'three slow—pepper,' and I did," declared Rose.

I suppose you girls who jump rope know what "three slow—pepper" means, but the boys probably will not, so I'll explain.

The person who is turning the rope for the other to jump, turns it very slowly for three times. Then she turns it fast. Jumping fast is called jumping "pepper," and sometimes jumping slow is called "salt." And I have heard some little girls, when they were

jumping rope, call for "mustard and vinegar." But that is very fast indeed—too fast for little girls, I should think. Rose and Vi never jumped faster than pepper.

"Yes, I know I said 'three slow—pepper,'" admitted Vi. "But I didn't want you to give me such fast pepper."

"Oh, well, try it again," said Rose, good-naturedly. "I won't go so fast the next time."

So she began turning the rope again, and Vi started to jump. This time all went well, and Vi, when it came to the "pepper" part, did so well and kept it up so long that Rose at last cried, with a laugh:

"Oh, my arm is tired! Let me rest, Vi!"

"I will," said the little girl. "I'm tired, too. After I rest a minute I'll turn for you."

They sat on the grass under the trees for a while, and then began taking turns jumping again.

"Now let's try a new way," suggested Rose after a bit. "We'll see how high we can jump over the rope."

So they began this game, and pretty soon some little girls from the house across the

street came out to play with Rose and Vi. They were from a family that Aunt Jo knew, and had played with the little Bunkers before.

The children had lots of fun, skipping rope, and seeing who could jump the highest. Rose was best at this, though Mabel Potter, one of the little girls from across the street, jumped nearly as high.

"Now let's go and play with our dolls again," suggested Vi. "Can you come over to our Aunt Jo's house, and sit on her porch?" she asked Mabel, Florence and Sallie, the other little girls.

They said they could, and they were just starting to get their dolls when along came a boy with a basket of groceries on his arm. He had got out of a delivery wagon down the street, and was bringing some things to Aunt Jo. The boy had often called with groceries before, and Rose and Vi knew him. His name was Henry Jones.

"Hello, little girls!" called Henry, for he was older than any of them. "What you doin'?"

"Seeing who can jump highest," answered Rose.

"I can jump higher'n any of you!" boasted Henry. "Want to see me?"

"Well, you ought to jump higher—you're bigger'n we are," said Mabel.

"Well, I'll jump and keep on holding my basket," offered the grocery boy. "That'll make it harder for me. Go on! Hold the rope up real high and I'll jump over it."

"Maybe you might spill the things in your basket," suggested Rose.

"No, I won't. I'm a good jumper," said Henry. "Hold the rope up real high."

Rose took hold of one end of the rope and Mabel the other. They held it across the sidewalk as high up as their own waists.

"Higher!" ordered Henry.

They raised it a little.

"There! That's high enough!" said the grocery boy. "Now you watch me sail over that. I'll show you some jumpin'!"

Henry, still holding his basket of groceries, stood on the sidewalk, a little way back from the rope. Then he took a run and started toward it. Up into the air he jumped, but something sad happened.

Whether Henry did not spring up high

enough, or whether one of the girls raised the end of the rope when she ought not to have done so, no one ever knew.

But what happened was that Henry's feet became entangled in the cord, and down he fell, luckily on the grass at one side of the pavement, and not on the sidewalk stones, or he might have been hurt.

He sat right down flat, and his basket bounced off his arm, and a lot of groceries spilled out of it.

"Oh, did you hurt yourself?" asked Rose.

Henry was too much surprised, for a moment, to speak. He looked as if he did not know what had happened. Then he slowly got up.

"No, I didn't hurt myself," he answered. "But I guess I can't jump as high as I thought I could. But I'm going to try it again."

"Oh, you'd better not," Mabel said. "You might break some more eggs."

"I didn't break any eggs!" declared Henry.

"Yes, you did! Look at that bag," said Rose, and she pointed to one that had bounced from the basket, together with other bags

and bundles. From this bag something yellow was running on the grass.

"Oh, dear! I guess I did bust some eggs!" exclaimed the grocery boy. "Your aunt'll be awful mad!" he went on. "I wish I hadn't jumped the rope."

Henry picked up the bag of eggs and looked inside.

"Only one's busted," he said, "and that's just partly cracked. I'll hurry into the house with it and she can put it in a dish and save it. 'Tisn't cracked very much."

"That's good," said Rose. "Parker is going to bake a cake, I heard her say, so she'll need some eggs right away, and she can use the cracked one first."

"I'm glad of that," observed Henry.

Then he hurried into Aunt Jo's house with the eggs and other groceries, and when he came out—not having been scolded a bit—the girls had gone with their jumping-rope, so Henry didn't have another chance to take a tumble.

On the shady porch of Aunt Jo's house Rose, Vi and their three little girl friends played with their dolls. They were having

lots of fun, undressing and dressing them, sending them on "visits," one to another, and having play-parties.

"Do you like it here?" asked Mabel of Rose.

"Oh, yes, lots," was the answer. "We've had just the loveliest summer. First, we were at Grandma Bell's, and now we're at Aunt Jo's, and maybe we'll go to Cousin Tom's at the seashore before we go back home."

"You've got lots of relations, haven't you?" asked Sallie.

"Oh, that's only part of 'em," Rose went on. "We've got more," and she mentioned them.

Vi was putting her doll to sleep on a bed of grass made in a corner of the porch, when a door slammed and the sound of running feet was heard.

"Hush! Don't make so much noise!" exclaimed Violet in a whisper. "My doll's asleep."

"It's Margy and Mun Bun," said Rose, as the two smallest Bunkers came racing around the corner of the porch. "They're my little sister and brother," Rose explained to the

other girls. "They've just had a nap, so they feel like playing now."

"Can we have some fun?" asked Margy.

"We want lots of fun!" added Mun Bun.

"Oh, dear! They'll wake up my doll!" whispered Vi. "Can't you two go away and play somewhere else?"

"Here. I'll let 'em take these marbles," said Mabel. "They're my little brother's. He gave me his bag to hold when he went off to play tops with some of the boys. I'll let Margy and Mun Bun take the marbles to play with."

"That'll be nice," said Rose. "Run along, Mun Bun and Margy, and play marbles."

This just suited the younger children. Down off the porch they ran, and soon the others could hear them laughing and shouting. But pretty soon Margy came running back.

"Come an' get Mun Bun," she said to Rose. "He's got his head in, an' he can't get it out."

"Got his head in where?" asked Rose.

"In a hole," answered Margy quite calmly.

CHAPTER XXII

OUT TO NANTASKET BEACH

When Margy told Rose about Mun Bun being down in a hole, Mabel, Florence and Sallie looked much more frightened than the little girl who had come running to the porch with the news. Indeed, Margy did not seem frightened at all; but, of course, Mun Bun could not stay always with his head in a hole, so she had come to tell some one to get him out.

"What kind of a hole is he in?" asked Mabel.

"Can't he ever get out?" Florence inquired.

"I don't know," answered Margy. "It's a funny hole. It's in the yard, and Mun Bun's head is away down in it. I can't see his head, but his legs are stickin' out."

"Mother! Mother!" cried Rose, running into the house, where Mrs. Bunker was sit-

ting in the sewing-room with Aunt Jo. "Oh, Mother! Mun Bun——"

Rose had to stop, for she was out of breath.

"What's he been doing now?" asked Mrs. Bunker. Then she saw Rose's face, and added: "Oh, has anything happened?" and she hurried over to Rose.

"Margy says his head is in a hole in the yard, and that his legs are sticking out," went on the little girl. "Mun Bun and Margy went out to play marbles an'——"

But Mrs. Bunker did not stop to hear. Followed by Aunt Jo, out she rushed to the yard, and there she saw a strange sight. In the middle of the lawn Mun Bun seemed to be kneeling down. But the funny part of it was that his head did not show. And yet it wasn't so funny either, just then, though they all laughed about it afterward.

"Oh, what has happened to him?" cried Mrs. Bunker as she rushed across the grass. Aunt Jo was beside her, and Rose, Vi, Margy and the three other girls followed.

"Mun Bun! Mun Bun!" called his mother, as she came closer to him. "What are you doing?"

"Oh, my head's in a hole! It's in a hole, and I can't get it out!" sobbed the little fellow. And, just as Margy had said, his voice did sound strange—as if it came from the cellar.

"Don't be afraid. I see what has happened," said Aunt Jo. "Mun Bun isn't hurt, and I can get him out of the hole."

"And can you get his head out, too?" asked Vi.

"Oh, yes, his head and—everything," said Aunt Jo. "I see what he has done. He has taken the cover off the lawn-drain, and stuck his head down in it, though why he did it I don't know."

"He's trying to get some of our marbles," explained Margy, as Aunt Jo and Mother Bunker hurried to the side of Mun Bun. "The marbles rolled down the hole in the yard and Mun Bun said he could get 'em back. So he stuck down his head, and now he can't get it up."

"I wonder why?" said Mother Bunker.

"It's on account of his ears," said Aunt Jo, who had her hands on the head of Mun Bun now. "They stick out so they catch on

the side and edges of the hole. But I'll hold them back for him."

She slipped her thin fingers down into the hole, on either side of Mun Bun's head. Then she raised up his head, and out of the hole it came.

Mun Bun's face was very red—standing on his head as he had been almost doing, had sent the blood there. His face was red, and it was dirty, for he had been crying.

"Now you're all right!" said Aunt Jo, kissing him.

"Don't cry any more!" went on Mother Bunker, as she clasped the little boy in her arms. Mun Bun soon stopped sobbing.

"I see how it all happened," went on Aunt Jo. "In the middle of my lawn is a drain-pipe to let the water run off when too much of it rains down. Over the hole in the pipe is an iron grating, like a big coffee strainer. This strainer keeps the leaves, sticks and stones out of the pipe. But the holes are large enough for marbles to roll down, I suppose."

"Some of my marbles rolled down the holes, and so did some of Margy's," explained

Mun Bun. "That is, they wasn't our marbles, but *she* let us take 'em," and he pointed to Mabel. "And when they rolled down in the little holes I wanted to get 'em back. So I put my head down to look and I couldn't get up again."

"But if the holes were only large enough to let marbles roll through, I don't see how Mun Bun could get his head down them," said Mrs. Bunker.

"Oh, but he lifted off the iron grating of the pipe, and put his head right down in the pipe itself," said Aunt Jo. "The iron grating is made to lift up, so the pipe can be cleaned. I suppose Mun Bun found it loose, lifted it up, stuck his head down, and then the edge of the strainer-holder held his ears, so he couldn't get loose. I pushed his ears in close to the sides of his head, and then he was all right."

And that is just the way it happened. Mun Bun, when he saw the marbles roll down into the drain-pipe, wanted to get them back. He could easily lift up the grating, but when his head was in he could not so easily get it out again. So he yelled and cried, and Margy

heard him and went for help, which was a good thing.

"Well, you're all right now, but don't ever do anything like that again," said Aunt Jo.

"I won't," promised Mun Bun, as his mother carried him to the house to be washed and combed. "But I wanted the marbles, and they're down the pipe yet. I couldn't get 'em."

"Never mind," said Mabel. "My brother has lots more. He won't care about losing a few."

And he did not, so Mun Bun had all h trouble for nothing, not even getting back the marbles. But it taught him never to put his head in a hole unless he was sure he could get it out.

When Russ and Laddie came home from the moving picture show, they heard all about what had happened to their little brother.

"Let's go out and look at the hole," suggested Laddie.

"All right," agreed Russ. "I knew it was there, 'cause the last time it rained I saw water running into it. But I didn't know the iron grating lifted up."

For several days after that the six little Bunkers had lots of fun at Aunt Jo's. They played all sorts of games, and had rides on the roller-skate wagon Russ had made, as well as in the express wagon, pulled by Alexis, the big dog.

They went out to Bunker Hill monument, where they were told something about what had happened when the men of the colonies fought that these United States might become a free nation.

"Daddy," asked Vi very seriously, "didn't they name this monument after you?"

"How could they?" broke in Russ. "This monument was put up years and years before Daddy was born."

"Well, maybe they named it after his great, great, I don't know how many great grandfathers," put in Laddie.

"No, it wasn't named after any one in our family," answered Daddy Bunker.

The father also took the children out to the Charlestown Navy Yard, and told them something about the navy and how our fighting men of the sea helped to keep us a great and free people.

And then, one day, Russ saw his mother and father and Aunt Jo looking over some papers and small books. Russ knew what they were—time tables, to tell when trains and boats leave and arrive. He had seen them at his father's real estate office, and also at the house in Pineville just before the family started for Grandma Bell's.

"Oh, are we going home?" asked Russ, his voice showing the sadness he felt at such a thing happening.

"Going home? What makes you think that?" asked his father.

"Indeed, I hope you're not going home for a good while yet," said Aunt Jo. "It hardly seems a week since you came."

"Well, I'm glad you have enjoyed us," said Mother Bunker.

"But are we going home?" persisted Russ.

"No, not yet," answered his father. "You think because we are looking at time tables we are going to leave. Well, we are, but we are only going on an excursion, or picnic."

"Where?" asked Russ, and once more he felt happy.

"Out to Nantasket Beach," said Aunt Jo.

"That's a nice trip by boat. It takes about an hour and a half from Boston, and we are looking to see what time the boats sail and come back."

"Oh, are we coming back?" asked Russ.

"Yes. We can only spend the day there," said his mother. "But Aunt Jo says it is very nice. It's a sort of picnic ground, with all sorts of things at which you can have fun. There are merry-go-rounds and roller-coasters. And you can have nice things to eat, and can play in the sand near the ocean."

"Oh, that'll be fun!" cried Russ. "When are we going?"

"To-morrow," answered Aunt Jo.

Russ jumped up and down, he was so happy, and ran out to tell the other little Bunkers.

And the next day they all went out to Nantasket Beach. While they were there something very strange and wonderful happened, and I'll tell you all about it.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE MERRY-GO-ROUND

"Oh, look over here!"

"See this funny boat!"

"Look, Daddy! What's that man doing?"

"Oh, I hear some music!"

These were some of the things the six little Bunkers said and shouted as they were on the boat going to Nantasket Beach. The day was a fine, sunny one, and they had started early in the morning to have as long a time as possible at the playground, for that is what Nantasket Beach really is.

Russ and Rose, Violet and Laddie, and Margy and Mun Bun ran here and there on the boat, finding different things to look at and wonder over on the vessel itself, or in the waters across which they were steaming.

Mother and Daddy Bunker sat with Aunt Jo in a shady place on deck, and watched the children at their play.

Russ and Laddie and the two older girls were standing near the rail, toward the front, or bow, of the boat, and they had to hold their hats on to keep them from being blown away.

"I would like a kite here," Laddie said. Then he watched some boats moving back and forth in the water, big ones and little ones, and, suddenly turning to his brother, said:

"I've got a new riddle."

"What is it?" Russ asked. "I can guess it."

"Nope! You can't!" Laddie went on. "And it's an easy one, too."

"Go on and tell it!" exclaimed Russ. "I know I can guess it."

"Why is this boat like a duck?" asked Laddie. "Now, you can't answer that."

"I can so!" cried Russ, as he thought for a moment. "That's easy. This boat is like a duck 'cause it goes in water."

"Nope!" said Laddie, shaking his head with vigor.

"It is so!" cried Russ. "I'm going to ask Mother."

The two boys went in search of their mother, leaving Rose and Vi up in front.

"What is it now?" Mrs. Bunker wanted to know, as the two boys ran up to her.

"Laddie made up a riddle about 'why this boat is like a duck,' and when I told him 'cause it goes in water like a duck, he says that isn't the answer. It is, isn't it?"

"That isn't the answer I mean!" exclaimed Laddie, before his mother had a chance to speak.

"Well, I suppose Laddie can pick out the one answer he wants to his own riddles, if he makes them up," said Mrs. Bunker to the two boys.

"I have an answer," said Laddie, "and Russ didn't guess it right."

"Give me another chance," pleaded the older boy. "I know why the boat is like a duck—'cause it *swims* in water! That's it!"

"Nope!" said Laddie again, shaking his head harder than before.

"Then there isn't any answer!" declared Russ.

"Yes, there is, too," insisted Laddie. "I'll tell you. This boat is like a duck because it

paddles! See? A duck paddles its feet in water and this boat paddles its wheels in water. I saw the paddle-wheels when we came on board."

"Huh!" exclaimed Russ. "I could have thought of that if you'd given me one more turn."

"Isn't that a good riddle?" demanded Laddie, smiling.

"Pretty good," admitted Russ. "I'm going to think up one now, and I'm sure there can't anybody answer it. You wait!" and he went off by himself to think up his riddle.

Margy and Mun Bun, after running about a bit, had heard some music being played on board, and had teased their mother to take them to hear it. This Mrs. Bunker was glad to do, as it gave her a chance to sit quietly with the smaller children.

Across the waters steamed the boat, and Russ finally gave up trying to think of a hard riddle, and walked here and there with Laddie, finally getting to a place where they could watch the engines.

Russ did not find it as easy to think up a hard riddle as he had thought he would, but

BEST OF ALL THE CHILDREN LIKED THE MERRY-GO ROUND.

Six Little Bunkers at Aunt Jo's Page 223

he said he was going to try after they got back to Aunt Jo's house.

" 'Cause," he said, "there's so much to see now that I don't want to miss any of it."

It was a ride of about an hour and a half from Boston to Nantasket Beach, and that pleasure spot was reached long enough before noon for the children to play about and have fun before lunch.

They had brought some things to eat with them, but Daddy Bunker said they would also have something to eat at a restaurant. It was a good thing Mrs. Bunker and Aunt Jo did provide sandwiches, for the children were hungry as soon as they left the boat, and insisted on eating.

And then the fun began. There was plenty to do at Nantasket Beach, smooth slides to coast down on, funny tricks that could be played, and phonographs that one could listen to by putting the ends of rubber tubes in the ears after having dropped a penny in the machine. There were moving pictures and other things to enjoy.

Best of all the children liked the merry-go-rounds, and they had so many rides on the

prancing horses, the lions, the tigers, the ostriches and the other animals and birds that Daddy Bunker said:

"My! I'm afraid we'll all go to the poorhouse if I spend all my pennies."

"You can take some of the sixty-five dollars I found in the pocketbook," said Rose.

"No," and her father shook his head. "We mustn't touch that money yet. I haven't given up the hope of finding who owns it, though it certainly takes them a long while to find out about it. But there must be something wrong. Either they have not seen our advertisements, or they have gone far away."

"Can't we ever spend any of the money?" asked Russ.

"Well, maybe, some day, if we don't find the owner," said his father.

The children went in bathing, and then had lunch at an open-air restaurant. And such appetites as they had! The salt air seemed to make them hungry, even if they had eaten the sandwiches brought from home.

"Now I want some more rides on the merry-go-round," said Margy, after they had taken in some other amusements. "I want to

ride on the rooster this time. He's bigger than the rooster at Grandma Bell's, but he's nice and red."

Among the creatures in the merry-go-round machine was a big, wooden rooster, painted red, with his beak open just as if he were going to crow. Margy had ridden on a horse and on a lion, and now she wanted the rooster.

"Well, you may have just one more ride," said her mother. "But don't tease for any more."

"Why not?" Margy wanted to know.

"Because it might make you ill, my dear," said Mrs. Bunker. "Too much riding, when you go around in a circle that way, may upset your stomach. One ride more will be enough, I think."

Margy agreed to be content with one, but when that was over she had enjoyed it so much that she teased and begged for just one more.

"Oh, let her have it, Mother!" suggested Rose. "We'd all like another ride. And I'll sit beside Margy in one of the seats, and then maybe it won't make her sick."

Margy didn't look ill, and she seemed to be enjoying herself.

"Well, this is a sort of play-day," said Daddy Bunker, "and I want you children to have a good time. I don't suppose one more ride will do any harm," he said to his wife. "And I'll try to keep out of the poorhouse until we can use the sixty-five dollars in the pocketbook Rose found," and he laughed.

"Well, if you say it's all right I suppose it is," agreed his wife. "But this is, positively, the last ride!"

So the children got their tickets, and Margy and Rose took their seats in a little make-believe chariot, drawn by a green camel.

The music began to play, the merry-go-round began to turn and once more the children were having a good time. In chairs near the big machine Daddy and Mother Bunker and Aunt Jo waved to the children each time they came around.

The turn was almost over when Mrs. Bunker happened to see Margy leaning up against Rose. And the mother noticed that her littlest girl's face was very white. Rose, too, seemed frightened.

"Oh, I'm sure Margy is ill!" cried Mrs. Bunker. "She has ridden too much! Oh, Charles! Have them stop the machine!"

"It's stopping now," he said. He, too, had noticed the paleness of Margy's face.

Slowly the merry-go-round came to a stop, but even before it had altogether ceased moving Daddy Bunker had jumped on and hurried to where Rose sat holding Margy.

"Oh, Daddy!" exclaimed Rose, "she says she feels terribly bad."

"What's the matter with Daddy's little girl?" asked Mr. Bunker, as he took Margy in his arms and started to get off the machine. "Did you become frightened?"

"Oh, no! No, Daddy!" answered Margy in a weak voice. "But I feel funny right here," and she put her hand on her stomach. "And my head hurts and I feel dizzy—and—and——"

Then poor little Margy's head fell back and her eyes closed. She was too ill to talk any more.

CHAPTER XXIV

ROSE FINDS HER DOLL

"TAKE her out in the air," said one of the men in charge of the merry-go-round, as he saw Mr. Bunker carrying Margy across the floor. "They often feel a bit faint from riding too much, or from the motion. The air makes 'em all right. Take her right down to the beach. That would be best, I think."

"I will," said Mr. Bunker.

Tenderly he looked down at the little white face on his arm. Mrs. Bunker and Aunt Jo looked worried, as they hurried after Mr. Bunker, and Rose and Russ, who, with Violet, Mun Bun and Laddie had gotten off the merry-go-round, followed through the crowd.

"What's the matter? What is it? Was any one hurt?" asked several persons.

"No, it's only a little girl sort of fainted," a policeman said, and that was really what had happened to Margy.

"The fresh air down by the beach will bring her around all right," said the man who had first spoken to Mr. Bunker. "I'll look around for a doctor, if you like."

"Oh, I don't think she is as badly off as that," replied Margy's father. "As you say, the fresh air will bring her around."

So the six little Bunkers, with Margy being carried by her daddy, went down near the water. The merry-go-round was not far from the bathing pavilion where they had left their clothes when they went in swimming during the morning.

At the cashier's desk was a young lady, who gave out the tickets and took charge of watches, jewelry, money and other things that the bathing-folk left with her for safe-keeping. This young lady cashier saw Margy being carried by Mr. Bunker, and called to him:

"Bring the little girl up here. She can lie down on a bench in the shade, and feel the fresh ocean air. That will be better than having her out in the sun."

"Indeed it will," said Mrs. Bunker. "Thank you very much."

With some dry bathing-suits and towels, the girl kindly made a sort of bed on a bench for Margy, and there the little girl was tenderly put to rest by her father. Then he looked carefully at her, and listened to the beating of her heart.

"She'll be all right in a little while," he said. "If I could get her a glass of cold water——"

"I'll get you one," offered the bathing cashier. "We have some ice water inside."

"You are very kind," said Mrs. Bunker. "We went in bathing from this place not very long ago, but I did not see you here then.

"No, I come only in the afternoons," said the girl. "Another girl and I take turns, as the work is pretty hard on a hot day when lots of folks go in swimming."

She brought the water for Margy, and then the little girl opened her eyes and looked about her.

"Take a drink," said her mother. "Do you feel better now?"

"Yes," said Margy. "I'm all right. I felt awful funny," she said, and she smiled a lit-

tle. Her cheeks were not so pale now, and she tried to sit up.

"Better lie down a bit yet," said Daddy Bunker. "Then you'll feel a lot better. Next time you mustn't ride so much on the merry-go-round. Too many trips are not good for any one."

In a short time Margy felt so much better that she could sit up. The cashier came back from her place at the window to ask how the little girl was feeling, and she seemed glad when told that Margy was better.

Russ, Rose and the other children had been asked to stay outside and play in the sand, but now, having been told by Aunt Jo that Margy was nearly recovered, they came in the bathing pavilion office to look at their little sister. Just at this time there were not many people wanting bathing-suits, so the cashier who had been so kind was not very busy.

As Rose and the others stood looking at Margy, and also at the cashier, Vi suddenly exclaimed:

"Why, I know her!"

"Who?" asked Mrs. Bunker.

"Her," went on Vi. She pointed to the cashier. "She found me the day I was lost, when I went after the loaf of bread and I went down the wrong street and I couldn't find Aunt Jo's house. She found the right street for me. I know her—her name's Mary!"

The cashier turned to look at Violet.

"Oh, now I remember you!" she exclaimed. "Yes, I did see you crying on the street in the Back Bay section of Boston one day. I remember now. I could tell where you lived because my mother used to sew in that neighborhood, and I had seen the big dog at your aunt's house. So you got home all right, did you?"

"Yes, she came just as I was starting out to look for her," said Daddy Bunker. "We often wondered who had been so kind as to show Violet the right way, but all she could tell was that it was a girl named 'Mary'. I often thought I'd like to see her, and thank her for being so kind to our little girl, but, only knowing your first name——"

"My name is Mary Turner," said the girl.

"I live in Boston, though not at Back Bay, but I come over here every day on the boat to work."

"Do you like it?" asked Aunt Jo.

"Yes, it is very pleasant, and not too hard. I like the smell of the salt water. I'd be near the ocean all the while if I could. But we can't have all we want," and she smiled. "Shall I get you some more cold water?" she asked Margy.

"Yes, please," answered the little girl. "I feel a lot better now."

"That's good," said Mary Turner, as she went to the water-cooler.

"Wasn't it funny I should see her again?" said Violet. "She was awful nice to me when I was lost."

"She seems like a very nice girl," said Mrs. Bunker, "and she is certainly very kind to us. I'm glad we met her."

Mary came back with more water for Margy, who was now able to walk around, the feeling of illness having passed.

"I want to go down and play in the sand," she said.

"Better not go out in the hot sun right

away," advised Aunt Jo. "Stay in the shade a bit, Margy."

"Yes," urged Mary Turner. "Come and see my queer little office, where I sit all day and hand out tickets and take in gold watches and diamond rings and things like that."

"Do you keep 'em?" asked Russ.

"Oh, no! The people who go in bathing leave them with me for safety. I have to give them back when they hand me the check I give them. I keep each person's things separately in little pigeonholes, and there is a man on guard there, too,—a sort of policeman."

"Are there any pigeons in the pigeonholes?" asked Vi.

"Oh, no!" laughed Mary. "They just call them pigeonholes because they are like the openings that pigeons go in and out of at barns, and such places, I suppose. They are like the boxes in a post office, only larger. Come, I'll show them to you."

As this would keep Margy in the shade a while longer, Mrs. Bunker said the children could go with Mary and look at her "office."

"My daddy's got an office," said Rose. "It's a real estate office."

"Well, mine is different from that," Mary said.

They went with her to look. As it was rather soon after the dinner hour, not many persons were in bathing, and the compartments or "pigeonholes" were not all filled. In some, however, were the envelopes in which people sealed their watches, rings and other valuables.

The six little Bunkers were quite pleased at seeing Mary Turner's office, and the "policeman" who was on guard so no one would come in and take the envelopes.

"Did some one leave that when they went in bathing?" asked Mr. Bunker with a smile, as he pointed to something in one of the pigeonholes.

"Oh, no," answered Mary with a smile. "That's mine. It's a doll, and I brought it with me to-day, thinking I would have time to make a new dress for it, and give it to a little girl I know. I don't play with dolls any more, though I used to like them very much, and I still like to make dresses for them. But I've been rather busy this morning, helping Mr. Barton, who owns the bath-

ing pavilion, so I didn't get time to do any sewing."

As she spoke she took down the doll, and held it out for Margy and the others to see. And, as Rose looked at it, she exclaimed:

"Oh, look! Why—why, that's Lily! That's my doll that went up in the airship! That's Lily!"

"It can't be, Rose!" said her mother.

"Yes, it is!" insisted the little girl, as she took the doll from her sister's hand. "Look! Don't you 'member where there was a cut in her and her sawdust insides ran out and Aunt Jo sewed up the place with red thread?" and Rose turned the doll over and showed where, surely enough, the doll was sewed with red thread.

"Is that really your doll?" asked Mary, and there was a queer look on her face.

"It really is," said Rose Bunker. "I sent her up in a basket and there was a lot of balloons tied to it. I called it an airship and it got loose and Lily went away up in the sky, and I couldn't get her down."

"I said she'd come down," cried Russ, "'cause I knew the balloons couldn't stay up

forever. But we looked for the doll and couldn't find her."

"Did she drop out of the airship?" asked Rose eagerly.

"No, she came down with the 'airship,' as you call it," went on the bathing-pavilion cashier. "She was in a basket when I found her. And tied to the basket were some toy balloons. A few of them had burst, and the gas had come out of the others, so that they were all flabby and wouldn't keep the airship up any more. Then it came down, and it happened to land right in the back yard of the place where I board, in Boston.

"I saw it in the morning, when I went out to feed the pet cat, and I brought the doll in. She was all wet, and her dress had come off. But I carried her into the house and I've kept her ever since. I've been intending to dress her and give her to a little girl, but I'm glad you have her back," and she smiled at Rose.

"Oh, isn't it just wonderful!" cried the little girl. "To think I have my own darling Lily back after her going up in the airship!"

CHAPTER XXV

THE POCKETBOOK OWNER

INDEED it was quite strange and wonderful, as they all agreed, that Rose's doll had been found in such a curious way. Rose, herself, was very happy, for, though the doll was not her "best" one, she liked it very much indeed, and had felt sad at losing Lily.

"I'm glad the airship came down at your house," said Rose to Mary.

"And I'm glad I found her for you," said the cashier.

"'Cause," remarked Vi, "she might have fallen in a house where there was a puppy dog, and he'd have bitten her and torn her dress. I wonder where her dress went."

"Oh, I guess the wind blew it off," said Russ. "The wind is awful strong up high in the air. Once it busted one of my kites."

"I guess that's how it happened," said

Daddy Bunker. "The toy balloons must have gone up very high, carrying your doll along, Rose."

"No. Lily didn't have on a dress that day. I was in an awful hurry, an' I just wrapped a handkerchief around her. That blew away, I guess."

By this time Margy was feeling all right again, and after a little more talk with Mary, the six little Bunkers went out to play on the sandy beach, Rose carrying her doll.

"Oh, it's lovely at Nantasket Beach!" said Russ, as he and Laddie ran about and waded in the shallow water. "Thank you, Aunt Jo, for bringing us here."

"Oh, I'm enjoying it as much as you children are," said Daddy's sister.

But all things must come to an end, even picnics, and when the six little Bunkers had done about everything they wanted to at the pleasure resort it was time to take the boat back for Boston.

On board, after the children and the grown folks were seated, Vi saw her friend Mary Turner.

"There's the girl that found me when I

was lost, and the one that had Rose's doll," said Vi, pointing.

"Oh, so it is!" exclaimed Mrs. Bunker. "Don't you want to come over and sit by us?" she asked the bathing-pavilion girl.

"Yes, I should like to," was the answer. "It's lonesome riding home alone."

"Where do you live in Boston?" asked Mrs. Bunker, as Mary sat down near her and the children, who were too tired with their fun to romp around much.

"I board down near where I can get this steamer easily," was the answer. "I have a pass on the boat, and by walking to the dock I save carfare. And these days one has to save all one can," she added.

"You say you board," put in Aunt Jo. "Have you no relatives?"

"Oh, yes, I have a brother and a mother, but Mother is ill in the hospital," was the answer.

"That's too bad," said the ladies, who felt quite sorry for Mary.

Then they talked about different things until, at dusk, the boat landed at the wharf, and the six little Bunkers and all the other

passengers got off. Rose whispered something to her mother, who looked a little surprised and then spoke to Aunt Jo.

"Why, yes, I'd be delighted to have her," was the low answer, for Mary was walking on ahead, with Russ and Laddie.

"Rose thinks it would be nice to ask Mary to come to supper with us," said Mrs. Bunker to her husband. "Aunt Jo says that she is willing."

"Of course we'll ask her!" said Mr. Bunker kindly, and when Mary was told abont the plan she smiled and said she would be glad to come. So to Aunt Jo's nice home they all went, and Parker had a fine supper soon ready for them, even though she didn't expect company.

After the supper, which Mary seemed to enjoy very much, saying it was much nicer than at her boarding-house, she and the six little Bunkers sat on the porch and talked. Mary told about the funny things which sometimes happened at the bathing-beach.

"Well, I'm glad we went there to-day," said Rose. "If we hadn't I'd never have found my airship doll."

"You were very lucky," said Laddie.

"Yes," added Russ. "I wish I had such good luck as Rose. She found her doll and she found a pocketbook."

"Oh, I didn't tell you about that!" exclaimed Rose to Mary. "I really did find a pocketbook in the street, about two weeks ago, and it had a lot of money in it."

"Did it?" asked the bathing-beach girl, and she seemed interested more than usual.

"Oh, a lot of money," went on Rose. "Please, Daddy, can't I show Mary the pocketbook I found?" she asked, for Miss Turner had told the children to call her by her first name. "I want to show her the pocketbook I picked up," went on the little girl.

"All right, you may," said Mr. Bunker. "I'll get it for you," and he brought it from the house.

"There it is!" cried Rose. "Wasn't I lucky to pick that up?"

"Indeed you were," said Mary Turner, and then, as she caught sight of the wallet in Mr. Bunker's hand she exclaimed:

"Why, there it is! There's the very one! Oh, to think that you have it!"

"Do you know whose this is?" asked Mr. Bunker. "Ever since my little girl found the wallet we've been trying to find the owner, but we haven't been able to."

"That's my mother's pocketbook!" cried Mary. "And it's on account of that she's in the hospital, and ill. Oh, how wonderful!"

"Is this really your mother's purse?" asked Mr. Bunker.

"It surely is," answered the bathing-beach girl. "She had just sixty-five dollars in it."

"That's just how much was in this!" exclaimed Russ.

"And besides," went on Mary, "I know the pocketbook. It has a little tear in one corner, and the clasp is bent."

"That's right," said Mr. Bunker.

"And," went on Mary, "besides the sixty-five dollars there was a funny Chinese coin with a square hole in the middle. Did you find that in the purse?"

"Yes," exclaimed Aunt Jo, "there was a Chinese coin in the pocketbook! That proves it must be your mother's pocketbook."

"I'm sure of it," said Mary. "Oh, how glad she'll be that it is found, and the money,

too. That is—if we can have it back," she said softly.

"Have it back? Of course you may!" cried Mr. Bunker. "If it is your mother's we want you to have it. Was there anything else in the purse when your mother lost it?"

"Yes," Mary said, "there was a letter from my brother, but part of it was torn off," and she spoke of what the note had in it. Then they were all sure it was Mrs. Turner's purse.

The letter, from which the lower part had been torn, was from Mary's brother John. He was a soldier in the army. His mother had written, telling him that her brother, Mary and John's "Uncle Jack," had sent the money to her, and that she was going to spend it in trying to get a rest of a month, as she was very tired from overwork.

But the pocketbook had been lost by Mrs. Turner, and, as Mary said, it made her mother ill, so she had had to go to the hospital.

But through the good luck of Rose everything had come out all right, for Mary felt that the news of the recovery of the money would take the worry from Mrs. Turner's

mind, thus making it easier to regain her health.

"You found my doll," exclaimed Rose, "and I found your pocketbook! We are both lucky!"

"Indeed we are," said Mary, smiling, as she took the wallet from Mr. Bunker. "Oh, but Mother will be happy now!" went on the girl.

"Mother had been overworking, for we are poor and she had had us two children to bring up, as my father is dead. She was on her way to see about going away for a time to get a good rest, now that John and I are old enough to look out for ourselves, when she lost the purse and the sixty-five dollars.

"She felt so bad about it, when she couldn't find it, that she was made ill, and had to be taken to a hospital. We did not tell my brother, as we did not want to worry him. But I know this good news will make Mother better.

"I walked all around the streets near where she thought she had lost her purse, but I couldn't find it."

"Didn't you read the lost and found ad-

vertisements?" asked Mr. Bunker. "We advertised the finding of the pocketbook in the papers."

"No, I was so worried about Mother that I never thought to," was the answer. "And when I had her taken to the hospital, and found a boarding-place for myself, and went to work at Nantasket Beach, I thought there was no use to look. I never expected to get the money back."

"But you did, and I'm glad I found it," said Rose.

They were all glad. Mr. Bunker took Mary that very night to the hospital where her mother was, and the good news so cheered Mrs. Turner that the doctor said she would soon get better, and, after a while, entirely well. That is what good news sometimes does.

But the good luck of the Turners did not end with the getting back of the lost pocketbook. Aunt Jo became interested in the little family, and promised to give Mrs. Turner plenty of work to do at sewing as soon as she was well. And a better place was found for Mary to work, where she would

not have to take the long trip back and forth from Nantasket Beach.

So many good things came about just because Rose saw the pocketbook and picked it up.

And now my story is nearly done. Not that the six little Bunkers did not have more fun at Aunt Jo's, for they did, but I have not room for any more about them in this book.

"But do we have to go home right away?" asked Russ, when he heard his father and mother talking of packing up a few days later.

"Oh, no," was the answer. "We have a letter from another of our relatives, asking us to come to see him before we go back to Pineville, and I think we'll accept."

"Where is it?" asked Rose.

"Down at the seashore," answered her father. "Don't you remember?" And what next happened to the children will be told in the book after this, to be called, "Six Little Bunkers at Cousin Tom's."

It was a beautifully sunshiny day. Out on the lawn Russ and Laddie were playing with the hose.

"Mother, make Russ stop!" suddenly Laddie cried.

"What's he doing?" asked Mrs. Bunker, who could see that not very much was happening.

"He's squirting water on me from the hose."

"I am not, Mother," said Russ, laughing. "I'm only making believe Laddie is in bathing down at Cousin Tom's at the seashore, and when you go in swimming you've got to get a little wet!"

"Oh, well, if you're making believe play *that,* all right," said Laddie, "wet me some more."

Russ did. So, at their play, we will take leave, for a time, of the six little Bunkers, wishing them well.

THE END

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